

**PRIMARY (JUNIOR)  
TEACHING TODAY**

**VOLUME ONE**



# PRIMARY (JUNIOR) TEACHING TODAY

GENERAL ENGLISH

R. K. POLKINGHORNE, B.A. (LOND.)  
M. I. R. POLKINGHORNE, B.A. (LOND.)

PRACTICAL SPEECH TRAINING

RODNEY BENNETT, M.A.

VARIED FORMS  
OF DRAMATIC WORK

RODNEY BENNETT, M.A.

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# J I N G L E S

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## WALL CHARTS

FOR USE WITH THIS VOLUME

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| I Picture Dictionary: Names or Nouns         | III Picture Dictionary: Sentences |
| II Picture Dictionary: Action Words or Verbs | IV Find a Title for this Picture  |

# SECTION ONE

## GENERAL ENGLISH

### CHAPTER ONE

## TEACHING READING

**R**EADING is the most important subject—if it can be called a subject—in the Primary School. It should indeed be the concern of *every teacher, whatever subject he teaches*. If children are to become independent workers and thinkers, they must be able to read for themselves as soon as possible.

There are three stages in learning to read:

(1) The mechanics of reading, learning to recognize words.

(2) Reading for information. (See following chapters.)

(3) Reading for appreciation. Some children and even adults never reach this stage. (See Chapter X.)

A great number of children promoted from the Infant School to the Junior School will have mastered the mechanics of reading, and if suitably graded material is provided, they will continue to make progress. They need much practice, however, in reading for information (Chapter II).

But—and it is a very big but—there will always be a number of children from the Infant School who have not mastered the mechanics of reading—who cannot read. Unless these children

are helped in the right way, further progress is impossible. They will even forget the little they have learnt in the Infant School. It is no use waiting for them to pick up reading, nor will it come to them suddenly one day. To master the mechanics of reading means for them, and for their teachers, patient and persistent work and carefully graded work.

### Grading for Reading

Individual attention is essential. Backward children are often the result of class instruction. If the busy teacher can give a backward reader only five minutes of her time, it is worth giving. The child can ask questions and be encouraged. He can show what he has learnt. Because of this individual attention, it will be easier to place the backward child in the group best suited for him.

In planning the group lessons, it should be remembered that *short, frequent* periods are better than *long* periods at longer intervals. There should be at least six reading lessons a week: one oral lesson for the whole class is, if possible, often advisable, so that the backward children can hear

good reading; two lessons, when the class is taught in sections, the A section doing silent reading with exercises (see Chapter II), while the B section are being helped by the teacher with oral reading; three lessons for group reading. If there are five or six groups, each child gets a chance of reading several times. The success of the group method depends on the careful grading of the children, and the leaders placed in charge. The teacher should go from group to group, supervising and giving advice to leaders.

A good supply of suitable books is needed. There are a fair number of cheap, graded supplementary readers, though some are not too carefully graded. The following sets are interesting and useful: *The London Supplementary Readers* (U.L.P.); *The Children's Hour Readers*, Series III and IV, and *Pleasure Readers*, Series A, B, C (Oliver & Boyd Ltd.), and so on.

Other books are suggested in different chapters—history books, nature books, etc. It is a mistake to let children read only stories in the reading lessons. Often books of general interest make a strong appeal to them, because they suggest things to do, such as *Projects for the Junior School*, Books I-IV (Harrap). This applies both to dull and to bright children.

It is now recognized that a good spoken vocabulary is not only helpful but almost essential to reading. So much attention must be paid to oral work and vocabulary building. The coming chapters deal in detail with oral work and vocabulary work. This chapter is mainly concerned with the teaching of reading to the backward group or groups.

Backward older readers may be

helped by allowing them to choose a topic that they would like to read about. The topic chosen—which may be the Zoo, a Fire, Red Indians, etc.—is then discussed. The children contribute what they know, the teacher adds a few interesting facts. In this way a reading page or booklet is built up from which a few important words can be selected for study, for example, *cage*. A picture is shown of the word to be learnt. The word is said by the teacher and written on the board. The child looks carefully at the word, says it, traces it in the air with his finger, or goes over the letters with his finger or a pencil. He then writes the word. Then the word is rubbed out and he writes it from memory. This method of teaching reading is further developed in Chapter IV—Spelling and Writing. The great help that spelling and writing can be to backward readers is not always recognized by teachers. When the child has acquired a small vocabulary in connection with a topic or a story he is going to read, he makes a picture dictionary. Each child has an exercise book, with one page for each of the common letters (one page may do for U, X, Y, Z). Into this book he writes (under the appropriate letter) the words he learns, placing opposite each a small drawing or illustration whenever possible. Drawing, colouring, and cutting out can thus be used to help reading and add interest to it. (See coming chapters.)

So that the children can help themselves, *Dictionary Cards* (Fig. 1) and *Word Strips* (Fig. 2) to match the cards are prepared. The cards are about the size of a playing card. On each card is a picture of a person, animal, object, or activity, etc., that appears in their reading books. On the word strips are

## TEACHING READING

the names only; these are words or phrases.

These dictionary cards can be used in three ways: (1) For learning the words. The children look at the picture and say the word, they look at the word, they "trace it," they write it, they write it from memory. All these processes are needed: *seeing, saying, thinking, writing, checking, using*. Most children are interested in pictures, and they like to say the word or words under each picture. Needless to say, the words are to do with stories they are going to read, or projects. (2) For matching exercises the word strips are jumbled up, and the child selects the right word for each dictionary card. Matching words is a good exercise, as it means looking at the words carefully, and backward readers rarely do this. (3) As dictionary cards. When they meet a word in their reading books that they do not know, they look through their picture dictionary cards to find it.

Dictionary cards may be made for sets of words, such as action words, flower names, animal names, names of things found in the kitchen, names of colours, and so on. Some children may be able to help to make dictionary cards and word strips. A top group of children may make a set for a lower group. This is an incentive to good writing. The pictures used may be drawn or cut from advertisements, newspapers, old magazines, etc.

Permanent dictionary charts for hanging on the wall from time to time are very useful for backward readers. (See Charts I and II.) Charts like these may be made for number words.

A child who can read the fifteen words on Chart I has made a good start. This Chart can be used as a test.

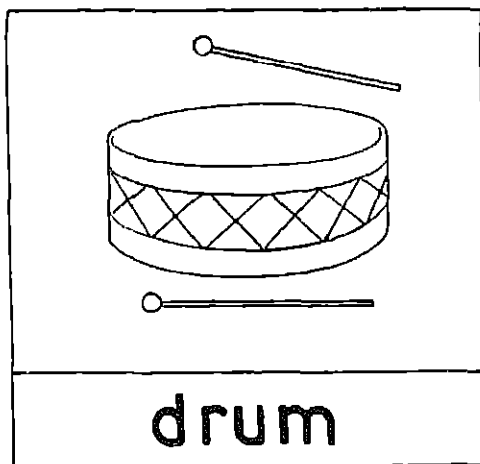


Fig. 1.—DICTIONARY CARD



Fig. 2.—WORD STRIP  
For matching with Dictionary Card.

The common action words (Chart II) are taught by printing each in turn on the board and letting the child perform the action. Children are eager to read the word so that they can do what it says. It is helpful to teach action words, such as *draw, cut-out, paint, colour*, etc., as soon as possible, so that children can follow written directions. While one group is reading to the teacher, another group can be reading directions and carrying them out, such as: "Draw a garden fence with three trees behind it," or "Draw three balls, colour one blue and two red," etc. The more a child needs to read, the more he wants to read. Self-help wall charts may be made in which words and their pictures are arranged in alphabetical order. These charts are also conveniently kept in portfolios. Children themselves

enjoy bringing pictures and helping to make charts.

Other suggestions for teaching words:

(a) Cut strips of paper or card and label them—*table, chair, window, floor, wall*, etc. Make several of each. Children place those that they can read on the right objects. At times these cards may be attached to the correct object and left there. (b) Useful sets of cards may be made by writing a noun (*bell, chair, nest, house*, etc.) on one side of a card, and pasting its picture on the back. If a child cannot read the word, he looks at the picture on the back. (c) Let the children choose from time to time a word they would like to see written on the board and would like to copy. This is a *reading-writing lesson*. Attention can be drawn to the letters as the word is written on the board. It is helpful if words are chosen from the book they are reading, although children enjoy odd words or names of things in which they are interested at the time, as *aeroplane, caterpillar*, etc. Attention is drawn to the letters in the word as they are written on the board. (d) Word matching has already been spoken of. Matching words with words aids the child to observe the differences and similarities in words. All the words taken should be, as far as possible, chosen from class readers, and the words should be shown used in sentences, but *any methods* that encourage children to look at words and take an interest in them must be used, because backward readers rarely observe words correctly.

Collect for the backward children full-page illustrated advertisements, for example those that advertise children's books. Make sure they contain some words with which the children are

familiar. Let each child have a page and choose his favourite crayon. He then looks at all the words on his page. When he finds a word he knows, he draws a circle around it with his crayon. Later the teacher goes over the page with the child, who reads each of the words which he has circled. This is especially useful for older backward readers. It makes them feel more grown-up to be reading from a magazine. It encourages them to look at advertisements in magazines at home, at advertisements in shops, etc., and try to identify words that they have learnt at school.

## The Sounds of the Letters

### LETTER RECOGNITION

The importance of *sound* in learning to read and to spell must never be underestimated. Unless the printed word is linked with a sound already familiar to a child, it will not be remembered. All children should be given some phonic training, so that they can tackle new words themselves. With brighter pupils this phonic training will be largely incidental and will proceed rapidly. Here we are concerned chiefly with backward readers.

When these readers know by sight some fifteen or so words, begin with the twenty-one consonants and make sure that the children can recognize them and their sounds. Take one each day, using any or all of these methods.

### THE CONSONANTS

(1) The teacher asks the children to look at the first letter of a certain word; for example the *b* in *bat*, and then at the remaining letters. They say the word, listening to the first sound. They are asked to think of any other



words that begin with *b*—*ball, butter, Betty*. They are told to find more words beginning with *b* for the next day. The next day many words are given, especially by the quicker children who enjoy listening for new words. Some children enlist the help of their parents, so very unusual words and their meanings may result!

A large sheet of paper is now pinned to a notice-board (kitchen paper is useful cheap paper). A capital *B* and a small *b* are printed at the top. The children have now to find pictures of things whose names begin with *b* (give the sound of the letter or name words beginning with the sound). Each child may paste his picture on the chart. A bottle of paste should be placed on a small table near the chart. The children are very eager when they come to school to show their pictures and paste them on. Much practice in paper cutting and pasting results. Vocabularies, too, are increased as children meet new experiences through pictures. The timid child who does not like speaking especially enjoys showing his picture and pasting it on. Those who cannot find pictures often draw their own, or parents do it for them. More sheets of paper are added to the notice-board, and the game goes on until the suitable words are exhausted. If many pictures are brought for the same word, the children can use them to make little booklets for themselves for *B words*. They mount the pictures in their own books (an exercise book or a book made of brown paper) and print the name under each picture.

During group reading, while one group is reading to the teacher, another group may find all the words beginning with *b* (or the letter chosen) on a certain

page or pages of their reader. They enjoy this.

A new letter is then chosen. Children often ask for certain letters; for example, a child asked for *V* because her name was Violet.

(2) A speech-training approach (see "Practical Speech-Training" section). Rhymes and jingles are useful for teaching the consonants. The letter is printed on the board and the jingle underneath, thus:

## T t

*Tommy Tinker's off to town,  
Trit trit trot, trit trit trot,  
To get a top for Tommy,  
And some toffee too for Tot.*

Some children will hear the sound of *t* at the end of the words *get, Tot, trit, trot*, but in the case of backward children one has to make clear and to emphasize for them sound differences that normal pupils assimilate naturally at an early age. The rhymes may be printed on cards underneath their respective letters, and the rhyme cards hung up for the children to read and study when necessary. Here are some letter-concentration jingles:

## B

*Bobby bought a bat,  
Billy bought a ball,  
Neither boy has ball and bat,  
But they don't mind at all,  
For Bobby bats and bats and bats  
Till Billy bowls him out,  
So both boys use both bat and ball  
By turn and turn about.*

C

*Cuckoos come in April,  
"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo!"  
They cannot make a cosy nest  
As other birds can do,  
But they catch a crowd of caterpillars,  
Smooth and woolly too,  
So welcome is the cuckoo's call,  
"Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo."*

P

*Percy is a piglet,  
Percy Pig's a pet,  
Pink and plump and perky,  
A pretty pig—and yet  
He wouldn't pass at parties,  
For, though he isn't big,  
Pink, plump, perky Percy  
Is a perfect little pig.*

S

*Slowly the sun sinks  
Red as can be,  
Soon the white moon  
Will silver the sea;  
The wind singing softly,  
The first starlets peep:  
Bedtime for little ones,  
Sleep, baby, sleep.*

SH

*Shut up shop!  
Shut up shop!  
Work time's over,  
Time to stop.  
Lights go out,  
Shutters drop—  
Shut up shop!  
Shut up shop!*

Z

*I saw a zebra  
Yesterday,*

*I saw a zebra  
Munching away.  
I saw a zebra,  
A zebu too.  
Where did I see them?  
Both at the Zoo.*

K

*Kitten on the keys,  
Kitten on the keys,  
You tinkle out a kind of tune,  
Kitten on the keys.*

D

*Dabble-duck, dabble-duck  
Down in the ditch,  
Why don't you get dirty,  
As dirty as pitch?  
How do ducks do it?  
I do wish I knew.  
Say how you do it, duck,  
Dabble-duck, do.*

M

*"Ma!" cries the lambkin,  
"Ma! Ma!  
I'm missing my mummy,  
I'm missing my ma.  
Ma, Mother, Mummy,  
Wherever you are,  
Come home to your lamb, Mummy.  
Ma, Mummy, ma!"*

R

*Rumpa rumpa rumpa rumpa  
Rolls the little drum,  
But his big bass brother goes  
Rum, rum, rum.  
The drummer and the drummer boy,  
Through the streets they come:  
Rumpa rumpa rumpa rumpa!  
Rum, rum, rum!*

Y (consonantal)

*Yes, yell, yellow, yawn, yelp, yea  
All begin the selfsame way,  
So do yam, yak, yacht and yawl—  
That makes just ten words in all.  
Yoho! I know another two,  
But I shan't tell them. Well, will you?*

L

*Lullaby, lily  
Asleep on the lake.  
Light will come early,  
Then lily will wake.  
Now, while the silver stars  
Glimmer and peep,  
Lullaby, lullaby,  
Lily asleep.*

G (hard)

*"Coosie, will you try to lay  
A good big egg again today?"  
"Go along, now! What's the use?  
I'm a gander, not a goose."*

N

*Nuts upon an engine,  
Nuts upon a tree,  
Nuts in the coal-hole,  
Nuts all three;  
But engine nuts and kitchen nuts  
Are not the nuts for me:  
The only nuts I nibble  
Are the nuts upon a tree.  
New nuts, sweet nuts  
Are nice as nice can be,  
But I never nibble nuts unless  
They've grown upon a tree.*

J

*Johnny Jenkins, Jean and June  
Joined to sing a joyful tune,*

*June sang top, and bottom Jean,  
But John got jumbled in between.  
Jean and June were joy to hear,  
But Johnny Jenkins—dear, oh dear!*

W

*Wee Willie Welladay  
Whistles with a will,  
Whistles down the willow way,  
Whistles up the hill,  
Whistles in the woodland,  
Whistles in the dell.  
What a whistler Willie is!  
Well, well, well!*

V

*Voles live out in fields and moors,  
And never never come indoors.  
They live on greens, they live in holes.  
That's all I've ever heard of voles.*

X

*The Exe is a river,  
As everyone knows.  
On Exmoor it rises,  
Then southward it flows.  
Though Exmouth and Exford  
Are known in the west,  
I expect that most people  
Know Exeter best.*

H

*If I were a grasshopper,  
How I could hop!—  
As high as a house,  
As high as a shop,  
As high as a tower,  
Perhaps even higher,  
As high as a steeple,  
As high as a spire.  
What fun we could have,  
What sights we could see,  
If we could be half  
As high hoppers as he!*

F

*How funny it would be  
If a fish had feet,  
And flies had fins -  
And were good to eat!  
If fish had feathers  
And fat frogs flew,  
I fancy they'd be funniest  
Of all, don't you?*

Children like to copy their favourite jingles and draw pictures for them.

(3) The children find words beginning with the letter *t* on their dictionary cards or picture-word cards. They also read little stories containing the "*t* words," etc., that they have been studying. They make up sentences with the words, for the teacher to write on the board for them.

(4) The game "I spy" [from *Backwardness in the Basic Subjects*, by Fied J. Schonell (Oliver & Boyd)] is useful both for letter recognition and for vocabulary work. Each child has the chance of saying, "I spy with my little eye something whose name begins with *b*." He draws the letter on the board, and the other children try to guess the word. At first the words chosen should be the names of things in the room, but later they can be the names of things seen in the streets, in the grocer's shop or some other kind of shop, in the park, etc.

(5) The children's impressions of the letters and their sounds can sometimes be strengthened by contrasting dissimilar letters, thus *g* and *s*. A short period may be given to words beginning with these letters: *gun, sun; game, same*; etc. *I* and *m* offer a good contrast: *ice, my*.

(6) The sorting of picture-word cards

according to their initial letters is a useful exercise. It also prepares the way for dictionary work. The children themselves enjoy preparing dictionary charts for each letter as already described.

THE VOWELS AND WORD FAMILIES

Dull children (and even children who have a good ear for sound) often lack the phonic knowledge necessary for tackling new words. They are puzzled by such common combinations as *ea, ay, ow, ur, ou, oa*, etc.

They try to sound the separate letters. This shows that direct phonic analysis is needed.

(1) Begin with the three-letter words containing the short vowel sounds: *bag, bed, big, box, bun*. To help those weak in auditory discrimination, picture-word cards are again used, with a picture on one side and the word on the other.

Rhymes and jingles are again used to make the children familiar with the short vowel sounds.

Short A

*Andy Pandy's fond of candy,  
And he makes it in a pan.  
One day he will have a sweetshop:  
That is Andy Pandy's plan.  
Then the lads will call him Andy,  
Andy Pandy, Candy Man.*

Short E

*Every morning Hetty Hen  
Settles in her nest at ten,  
Lays a fine big egg, and then  
Pecks about her pen again.  
Every day an egg at ten?  
Very useful, Hetty Hen.*

## Short I

*Ink is never fit to drink,  
Even when it's thin and pink.  
Even thin pink ink will quickly  
Make the drinker sick and tickly.  
That is why I never think ink  
Fit to drink, not even pink ink.*

## Short O

*Bob and Robin, Tom and Dots  
Sleep all night in four small cots.  
All of them sleep lots and lots.  
What a sleepy lot of tots!*

## Short U

*Guppy, our puppy,  
Is round as a tub.  
Our puppy, Guppy's  
A muddy young grub.  
His wag-tail is stubby,  
His coat's all stuck up,  
He's a stubby young  
Grubby young  
Tubby young  
Pup.*

Children like to collect these words into families and write them in little booklets, as in Fig. 3. Some "families" need a whole page; sometimes two "families" share a page. Children like to see what a big "family" they can make. First they keep to three-letter words, then they try words of four letters with short vowels, and words of two syllables. Their rhymes will help them. Where possible they draw pictures for each word.

(2) They now make booklets for the vowel digraphs: *ee, ea, oa, ou, oo, ow, ay, ai, ie, oe, ew, oi, aw, oy, ue*, as in Figs. 4, 5, 6. Children make drawings on the covers to give a clue to the sound and spelling of the words inside. More pictures may of course be drawn inside. Children enjoy collecting words to fill their booklets. When they have read a story they look for words for their booklets. Rhymes again help:

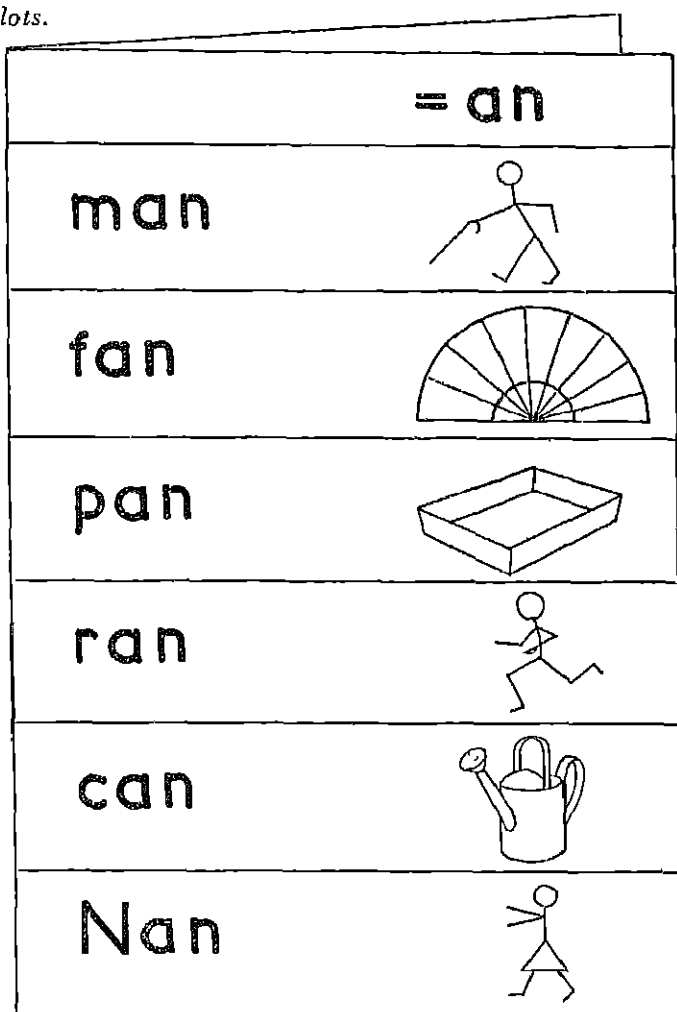
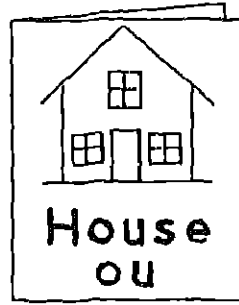
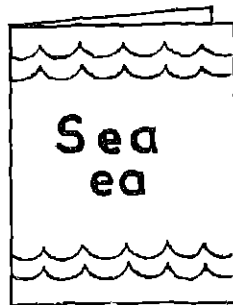
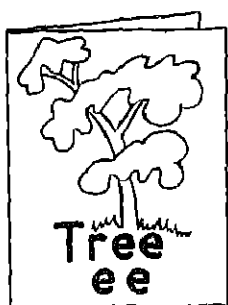


Fig. 3.—BOOKLET FOR WORD FAMILIES



Figs 4, 5, and 6 —BOOKLETS FOR VOWEL DIGRAPHS.

### Long OO

"Coo," says the Turtle Dove,  
 "Coo, coo, coo,  
 I've a cosy little nest,  
 And two eggs too.  
 Two eggs too!  
 Two eggs too!  
 What a lucky dove I am!  
 Coo, coo, coo!"

### Short OO

"Look!" clucks fluffy Mother Hen,  
 "Look, look!  
 Ten little chickabids! Ten,  
 Chook, chook!  
 Look, chook! Look, chook!  
 Look, chook, look!—  
 Ten little chickabids!  
 Chook, chook, chook!"

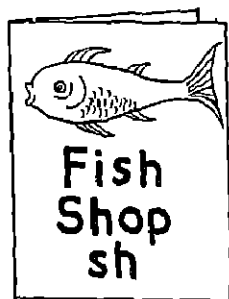


Fig. 7 —BOOKLET FOR THE COMMON CONSONANTAL DIGRAPHS

(3) Cards and booklets for the common consonantal digraphs: *ng*, *-ing*, *sh*, *wh*, *ch*, *th*, *ch*, and also these double consonants at the beginning of words, *tr*, *dr*, *pr*, *fr*, *gr*, *fl*, *pl*, *bl*, etc. (See Fig. 7.)

### NG

Swing, bells, sing, bells,  
 Ring, bells, ring,  
 Ding dong ding,  
 Ding dong ding.  
 That's the pretty ring-bells'  
 Swing-bells' song,  
 Ding dong ding,  
 Ding ding dong.

### CH

Charlie plays at chopping down  
 A tree to make a ship—  
 Chipper chopper, chipper chopper,  
 Chipper chopper chip.  
 First he chops the bottom through  
 And then he chops the top—  
 Chopper chipper, chopper chipper,  
 Chopper chipper chop.

### TH (voiced)

These are fingers, those are toes:  
 Ten of these and ten of those;  
 Or change it if you'd rather, please:  
 Those ten fingers, ten toes these.

TH (voiceless)

*Take a needle,  
Thimble too,  
Take some thread  
Of white or blue,  
Anything  
You think will do:  
Thinner, thicker,  
Thread it through.*

FL

*Flutter, flutter, flutter by,  
Flutter, flutter, butterfly.  
You'll find flowers if you try,  
So flutter by, butterfly.*

(4) Booklets for common letter combinations: *igh, ar, ir, qu, ur, er, ell, all, ill*, etc. (See Fig. 8.)

Q (kw)

*"Queen! Queen!  
Where have you been?  
It's quite twenty minutes  
Since last you were seen."  
"I've been keeping quite quiet,  
Quite quiet I've been,  
For keeping quite quiet  
Is good for a queen."*

Mixed hard C, K,  
QU (kw)

*Cab and clap and clatter,  
Kitten, king, and keen,  
Scamp and scoot and scatter,  
Quiet, quite, and queen:  
If it's quite and quiet,  
Kettle, king, and key,  
Why it's cat, cap, come and cook  
Is more than I can see.*

(5) Children should also be made acquainted with "long vowels." First

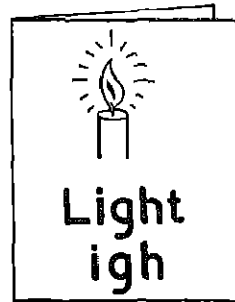


Fig. 8.—BOOKLET FOR COMMON CONSONANTAL DIGRAPHS.

draw their attention to the difference between short and long vowel sounds in pairs of words, as: *mat, mate, kit, kite; tub, tube*; etc. Then the children arrange words containing long vowels in families in booklets, as in Fig. 9, to get accustomed to the final *e*.

More rhymes and jingles will be found in the section on "Practical Speech Training." Rhymes and jingles help the child to absorb the words into his reading vocabulary.

The children look out for any words in their readers that they can add to their booklets of word families. This encourages observation and is a great help to spelling. Backward readers of eight or nine, because of their maturity, often proceed very rapidly with this

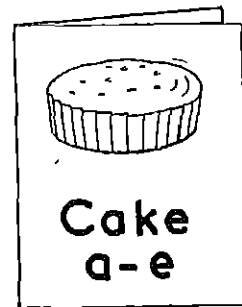


Fig. 9.—BOOKLET SHOWING THE FINAL *e* AND LONG VOWEL.

work of arranging words in family groups, so do quick younger children well taught in the Infant School. Weak spellers of almost any age benefit by filling up these booklets, especially collecting the *ea* words, such as *eagle*, etc.

The younger children enjoy trying to make original nonsense rhymes from their word families. Have many suggestions from them, and copy the best ones on cards. On the back write the name of the child who made the rhyme. These can be used as reading material. Here are some rhymes made by backward children of seven:

- (a) *The train, the train*  
*Was in the rain.*
- (b) *The bed, the bed*  
*Is red.*
- (c) *The little pig*  
*Began to dig.*

Stories may be made up by the children in which words from their "word families" are used. The sentences are written on the board as they are given by the children. Here is an example of one:

"Jill ran up the hill to the doll-shop to buy a doll. The tall shopman had a lot of dolls to sell. Down the hill Jill ran with her new doll Sall. But—down she fell like Jack and Jill. 'I will not yell,' said Jill. 'I will dust my doll and walk home.'"

Other stories may be told about Chit Chat, the squirrel, or the dog *Chip* who ran away with a *chop*, etc.

When the children have some acquaintance with word families let them have lists like the following to complete either orally or in writing:

<i>class</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>pink</i>
gr—	g—	th—
gl—	c—	di—
p—	h—	l—
l—	b—	s—
<i>town</i>		<i>sing</i>
br—	spr—	
d—	br—	
cr—	str—	
fr—	r—	

In connection with the study of word families, let the children find short words in long words. This exercise is useful for group work. While one group is doing it, a teacher can hear another group read. For this exercise the teacher writes several words upon the board. The children copy them and draw a ring around all the little words that they see in the big ones or, perhaps better still, they can write the little words underneath the big ones. Here is a list of words:

prince, many, orange, drink, box, seeds, letter, chair, meat, turkey, string, spinning, mice, slipper, cage, has, dear, gold, farm, open, candy, jam, ladder, tall, asleep, cat, seat, skate, sand, fireman, date, became, person, rabbit, bunny, window, robin, dresser, seat, bedroom, colour, grape.

If the children write the little words under the big words, it is easier for them when there are two or three little words in a big word, thus:

<i>candy</i>	<i>spinning</i>	<i>robin</i>
<i>can</i>	<i>spin</i>	<i>rob</i>
<i>and</i>	<i>pin</i>	<i>bin</i>
<i>an</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>in</i>
<i>drink</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>window</i>
<i>rink</i>	<i>ate</i>	<i>wind</i>
<i>ink</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>win</i>
		<i>in</i>



## TEACHING READING

Both methods can be tried. If they ring the words, they must decide upon one word to ring.

The children can also make longer words from shorter ones, as: *at, cat; and, band; ring, bring; ark, bark, barking.*

### RESEMBLANCES, DIFFERENCES, COMPARISONS, ETC.

Every effort must be made to help children to observe words in a systematic and accurate manner. It sometimes helps them if they underline the parts that look and sound alike in certain groups of words, in:

<u>ed</u>	<u>stay</u>	<u>come</u>
<u>bed</u>	<u>play</u>	<u>call</u>
	<u>house</u>	<u>come</u>
	<u>mouse</u>	<u>some</u>

Put on the board several known phonetic words that have like beginnings or endings. Pronounce the



[Courtesy of Messrs Horlicks Ltd.]  
Fig 10.—PICTURE FOR PHRASE OR SENTENCE MATCHING.



[Courtesy of Messrs. Horlicks Ltd.]  
Fig 11.—PICTURE FOR PHRASE OR SENTENCE MATCHING

words for the children several times if necessary. The children look at the words carefully and arrange them into groups—those with the same beginnings—those with the same endings.

Comparison is a valuable teaching aid: "Does this word look like any others you know? How does it look like them? In what way or ways is it different? Which part have you to look at carefully?"

*Saw* and *was* are often confused by stupid children, also *my* and *may*. Many words have the same beginnings and endings, as *father, fatter, faster; tell, tail, tall; apple, able*, etc. Such words often confuse poor readers and prevent them from getting the thought. The

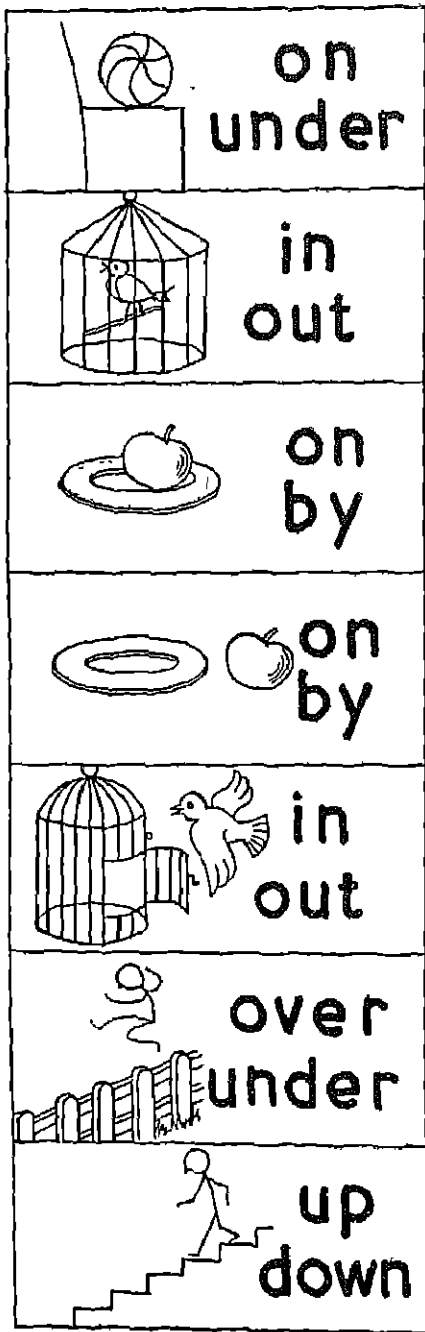


FIG 12.—PUZZLE CARDS FOR TEACHING LITTLE WORDS.

teacher notices the words that give trouble and puts them on the board for special study. Children should be encouraged to use in short sentences, and read, the words they have failed to recognize. The best first reading books for backward children are often the sentences made by the children and edited by the teacher to form little stories.

### Phrase and Sentence Recognition

Picture and phrase (or sentence) matching introduces meaning as well as word recognition. Very useful pictures can be cut from advertisements in newspapers, etc. (See Figs. 10 and 11, advertisements for Horlicks.) Chart III shows a reading chart for simple sentences that tell a short story. The pictures and sentence strips are cut out and put in an envelope. The child has to place the pictures in the right order with the correct sentence under each. Chart III can be hectographed for the children, and the hectographed copies cut up. The chart itself is useful for reading, story-telling, and oral work, also for children to refer to when doing their sentence matching. Useful sentences for reading and picture matching will be found in *English of Your Daily Life*, Book I (Longmans). These are stories of children's daily occupations: washing, dressing, breakfast, going to school, at school, etc.

### LITTLE WORDS IN PHRASES AND SENTENCES

Dull children who can recognize long words like *aeroplane* often confuse little words, such as *in*, *on*, *no*, *am*, *was*, *saw*, *of*, *for*, *from*, *her*, *has*, *with*, *when*, etc. Little words are often best taught in phrases, or by the puzzle cards shown

in Fig. 12. A child is told to look at the picture carefully, choose the right word, and make a sentence, thus: "The ball is *on the chair*," or "The ball is *under the chair*," according to the picture. These simple pictures can also be hectographed for the children and given for a test. They ring round the correct word. Sentences or phrases are written on strips of paper to be matched with the pictures, and the pupils draw pictures to illustrate the sentences: "He jumped *over* the fence," "The bird is *in* the cage," "He went *down* stairs," "The apple is *on* the plate," etc.

Cards like that shown in Fig. 13 can be made for *of*, *for*, and *from*, etc.: "A pot *of* jam," "A toy *for* Jane," "A letter *from* Dad," etc.

But although these devices are useful for variety, they must be used as far as possible *in connection with the actual books* being read. Any new words or difficult words being taught will be taught most effectively when they occur in the old material *in a new setting*. Phrase and sentence matching when thus used will help the children to make the full use of the meanings of words.

### Reading from Left to Right

Many backward readers tend to look at words from right to left, to reverse small words, and to look first at any letters they know in the middle of the word. It is helpful in these cases: (1) To let children use a pencil or their finger when reading; this helps them to attack the word from the left. (2) To use *cursive* writing. Writing, it must be remembered, plays a most important part in helping reading. The flow of cursive writing, together with the compact look of each word, helps the visual

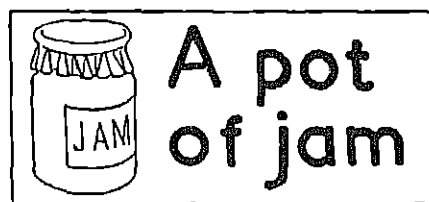


Fig. 13—FOR TEACHING PHRASES.

memory. Script writing with its detached letters is less clear, especially as poor readers and backward children often print their letters far apart. They rarely, therefore, see the word *as a whole*. The writing lesson will be found a great help to the reading lesson—words and sentences can be used from readers. It is perhaps not too much to say that combined *reading, drawing, writing* lessons will be found of the greatest value. Activities are essential in the Primary School—and activities mean that no subject can be kept in a watertight compartment. (3) *Spelling* is another help to reading, being especially helpful to children who tend to read from right to left. Learning to spell the words means closely examining the words. Normally, spelling comes after reading and understanding, but with certain children to teach them how to spell the words they are going to read will be found a great help. Spelling, of course, means writing. Sometimes children can first write a paragraph before they read it. (See Chapter IV. Spelling.)

In teaching backward readers one must be bound by *no rules*. What suits the normal child does not suit the slow or abnormal child. It must be remembered that quick, normal children practically teach themselves reading. *Teaching skill* is most needed with backward children. The successful teachers are

those who keep open minds—no method is *always* right. Every method needs adjusting. The teacher handicaps herself and her children if she keeps to the "Sentence method" or the "Look and Say Method" and excludes phonetics, or vice versa. Teaching skill is shown in adaptation of methods.

Helpful books for teachers who have to deal with backward children are:

*Teaching Reading to the Junior School.* With special reference to backward readers. (George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.)

*Backwardness in the Basic Subjects,* by Fred J. Schonell (Oliver & Boyd).

*The Psychology and Teaching of*

*Reading,* by Fred J. Schonell (Oliver & Boyd).

Reading tests, with directions for using them, will be found in the last books. These tests are useful when grading the children for reading.

Further suggestions for material for reading will be found in the coming chapters, also suggestions to show that reading cannot be taught as a subject to itself; it must most often have its main-springs in projects and other subjects. In one sense the more subjects a child learns in a purposeful way the better he can read. This is the same as saying the more interests a child has, the better reader he is likely to be.

## CHAPTER TWO

# SILENT READING AND READING FOR INFORMATION

THE main object in teaching reading is to enable pupils to acquire information from the printed page. Reading has been called the master key which unlocks the gateway to every other subject. Reading for appreciation, or the reading of literature, is dealt with fully in Chapters X and XI. This chapter deals with teaching reading so that children can get the thought accurately and quickly. Oral reading is only a means to an end.

With normal children of eight, more than half the reading lessons should be silent reading lessons. To make the silent reading lessons of value, the children must read *for a purpose*, and all silent reading should be checked. Different kinds of motives can be introduced, as will be shown, to direct and make purposeful silent reading, and link it up with activities.

The material for reading will include nature study, handwork, art, history, geography, arithmetic, physical training, indeed all the subjects in the curriculum. The children must not think that only stories are to be read in the reading periods, and that one never uses books for history and geography.

The various centres of interest mentioned in the History and Geography Sections (houses, food, clothing, time, music, travel, animal life, etc) will lead

to a great deal of informational reading for pupils of different ages. Both history and geography if rightly taught increase the child's vocabulary and give him *new experiences*, so that he becomes a better reader. In a sense we all read with our "experiences." The child who has had no "experiences of history" is shut off from reading history books. (See Volume II, HISTORY SECTION.) It is a great mistake to leave geography and history out of the time-table to give more time to reading. History and geography can teach reading just as well as fairy-tales.

One great advantage of the project method is that it shows children how one subject is linked up with another, and provides the children with many experiences. The enrichment of language background through activities and projects is the surest way of helping silent reading. Help in planning group projects will be found in the different sections in these volumes and in *Projects for the Junior School*, Books I to IV (Harlap). These books contain, also, useful reading material and activities suitable for the silent reading periods.

### Suggestions for Purposeful Silent Reading

The following suggestions have been found useful in various types of

Primary Schools. They form a comprehensive list from which the teacher will be able to choose something to suit her special needs. Most of them have been tested in large and small classes.

#### DRAMATIZING SENTENCES

At the end of a silent reading period a child comes out and acts a sentence. The child who guesses the sentence correctly comes out and acts another sentence. In the lower classes, the teacher may whisper to a pupil some sentence in the lesson read that lends itself to dramatization. The child who guesses the sentence reads it from the class reader. In the lowest group of all, simple words such as "cook," "sweep," etc., may be used. In upper classes different groups of children may pantomime scenes from the story. Children often read more carefully and thoughtfully, and try to visualize the scenes, if they are going to act them.

#### LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

The teacher writes upon the blackboard a series of statements telling the children what to look for as they read a new lesson. The result of their study may be checked later in a talk in which children give the answers, and read orally the sentences that prove their answers to be right. For example:

##### THE STORY OF ROSY CHEEKS

What to find out: (1) Where Rosy Cheeks lived. (2) How she was dressed. (3) What she saw. (4) What she held out her hands to feel. (5) The name of the Sun God in Egypt. (6) How she lost her sandal.

This reading lesson is from the *York Histories*, Book I (Bell). The story is the Egyptian story of Cinderella. (See

Volume II, HISTORY SECTION.) Passages to do with geography may be treated in the same way, as well as stories of everyday life, fables, fairy-tales, etc. Varied reading matter is important, especially for the brighter children.

#### ANSWERING QUESTIONS

This exercise is similar to the one above. The teacher writes on the board a list of "fact" questions on a story or certain pages in the book to be read. The children read the story to find the answers to the questions. These answers may be written, if the teacher needs time to attend to a backward group, or given orally in a class discussion. Below are examples of "fact" questions based on a story of the informative type in *English of Your Daily Life*, Book III (Longmans). It tells of a boy who broke a pane of glass.

"Fact" questions: (1) Why is glass just right for our windows? (2) Name three things we buy in glass jars or bottles. (3) How was glass first discovered? (4) How is glass made? (5) In what part of the world was it first made? (6) How are window panes made?

Some questions are not concerned so much with facts as with thought and imagination. This applies to questions on poems. For example:

##### STARS AND DAISIES

*The stars are tiny daisies high,  
Opening and shutting in the sky;  
While daisies are the stars below,  
Twinkling and sparkling as they grow.*

"Thought questions: (1) How are daisies like stars? (2) When do "star" daisies open? When do they shut? (3) How can daisies twinkle and sparkle?

## SILENT READING

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All kinds of questions can be set on materials used for silent reading, depending on the kind of material used and the age of the children. The greater the variety, the more incentive the child has to read. Sometimes the questions can be placed on the board before the reading begins, and sometimes after. On the whole, afterwards is better. If put first, the children look at once for the answers and miss some of the story.

Another interesting way of using "fact" questions is as follows:

The teacher writes on the board some "fact" questions about some topic in the book that they are going to read, for example, silkworms, coal, fishing, lions, etc. The children write answers to these questions to show how much knowledge of the subject they *already* possess. *After* the papers are collected the children read the selection in their readers. Then they close their books and answer the questions *again*. The first papers are returned, and each child marks his papers to see how much he gained by his reading. The children enjoy comparing their two tests.

Questions requiring one-word answers are easily corrected silent reading exercises. They are most useful if they are connected with material just read or topics in history, geography, etc., just discussed in an oral lesson, for example: Where does the sun set? "Yes-No Questions" amuse younger children. On the board very easy questions are written that contain the same words as on the pages read. The child has simply to write "yes" or "no." Can a rabbit run? Can a table talk? Are lambs baby sheep? Do cats wash their faces? Do dogs live in trees?

### RIDDLES

Riddles are useful for silent reading, and children enjoy them. In many cases they can draw as well as write the answer. For example:

(1) I grow on a tree. Sometimes I am red and yellow. Sometimes I am green. People like me in pies. What am I? (Apple.)

(2) I have a back. I have four legs. I cannot walk. I am found in a sitting-room. What am I? (A chair.)

(3) It swims in the river. It swims in the sea. It is good to eat. What can it be? (Fish.)

(4) Sometimes I am short. Sometimes I am long. You cannot see me at all if there is no sun. What am I? (Shadow.)

(5) I have a head. I have a foot. I am covered with clothes. I am not alive. What am I? (A bed.)

(6) I am black and white. I am folded. I tell you the news. What am I? (Newspaper.)

Backward readers need very easy riddles. For example:

(1) I have two long ears. I can hop. I like carrots. (2) I am made of wood. There is something long and black inside me. Children write with me. (3) I have a face. I have two hands. I tell you when to go to school. I tell you when to dine.

Older children can make riddles and exchange them in the silent reading period. Writing riddles helps composition and writing.

### COMPLETING SENTENCES

Sets of cards are prepared, each card having on it a number of sentences with one word missing. The children copy the sentences and supply the missing word. If the cards are numbered, the children can keep a record of those

they have used. Instead of cards, the sentences can sometimes be written on the board. Here are examples of different types of sentence:

(1) A motor-car has four —. A bird has two legs and two —, and so on.

(2) A man who sells tea and sugar is called a —. A man who grows corn is called a —, etc.

(3) The boy ran —. The wind blew —, etc.

(4) The dressmaker sews with a —. The carpenter uses a —.

(5) The sun rises in the —. You cross a river by a —.

(6) Long, long ago men lived in —. The last sentences refer to geography and history lessons.

As a variation of the above, the children are provided with sets of sentences which they complete by a drawing in place of the missing word. For example:

My dog sleeps in a —.

I saw a — in the baker's shop.

The bird's nest was in a tall —.

Stories that sometimes appear in children's papers and magazines, in which words are omitted and pictures inserted in their place, can be adapted to this purpose.

Sometimes the words to be placed in the blanks are written at the top of the sentences or story, and the child has to choose the right word from the list.

### Making Silent Readers

Two groups may make silent readers for each other. In this activity each child makes a booklet (several sheets of paper tied together; the booklets may also be made in the handwork period). This booklet contains pictures with directions for adding something more to the pictures, for example, a child

cuts out a picture of a dog's head from the newspaper and pastes it at the top of one of his pages; underneath he writes: "This dog is called Bob. He is waiting for a bone. Draw a bone for him and his kennel." On another page may appear a picture of a flower. The directions underneath read: "This flower grows in a pretty garden. Draw the garden."

Each child makes one booklet. He collects all his own pictures, writes his own compositions or directions, and designs and makes a book cover if he has time.

When the books are finished, the two groups or classes exchange books, and each child carries out the directions in the book which he receives. The completed book is handed back to the author for correction. Who is to keep the finished book? Generally the one who completes the drawing is allowed to keep the book.

### Telling a Story from Question Slips

This is a good method of encouraging quick silent reading and of teaching sequence or order in composition and story-telling:

The teacher writes a series of questions on a story that has been read, so that the answers given will make the complete story. She then numbers the questions and cuts them apart. Each child is given one of the question slips. The pupil who has the first question reads it silently, then stands up and gives the answer. Then the pupil having number two rises, without any direction whatever, and gives the answer to his question, and so on until the story has been told. If necessary the slips may be redistributed and the game played again and again until the



sequence of the story has been understood.

In the case of quick children the questions need not be numbered. When the group have read the story they reproduce it orally by means of the answers to the questions. Each gives the answer to his particular question as it arises in its correct sequence in the oral reproduction.

In the top classes the children can prepare sets of questions themselves. The best sets are asked in class.

## Following Instructions

In the handwork lesson, in drawing and painting lessons, in games periods, indeed in almost every lesson, children should sometimes have to follow directions *written* on the board or on slips of paper, instead of *spoken* directions. The steps written down must be simple and numerous. No steps should be explained. This form of silent reading, used from time to time in every class, is of great value. Children so rarely have to carry out written instructions that when faced with them they either carry them out incorrectly or seek help. Even grown-up people cannot often carry out printed instructions correctly! For younger children, many of the instructions will involve drawings. These directions are excellent for testing comprehension.

(1) The children draw pictures from blackboard directions:

(a) Draw a house with a red roof, a green door, and two windows. Draw the garden round the house, and the people who live in the house.

(b) Draw a lake. Put a boat on the lake. Draw a man in the boat. Draw a fishing-rod in his hand.

(c) Jack went to the seaside. He took

with him his bucket and spade. Draw a picture of Jack at the seaside building a castle with his bucket and spade.

(2) The children are given a series of pictures to draw that tell a story. For example: *Picture 1.* Draw a boy with a big bun by a garden seat. *Picture 2.* Draw the bun on the seat and the boy running after a butterfly. *Picture 3.* Draw a dog stealing the bun. *Picture 4.* Draw the boy standing by the seat crying. *Picture 5.* Draw the father giving him a new bun.

In the lower classes, the teacher may write directions on the board telling children to draw objects mentioned in a story, or characters, etc., in the story, as: Draw the dining-room of the Three Bears. Draw the Big Bear's chair. Draw the Middle-sized Bear's chair. Draw the Little Bear's chair.

Sometimes the children are told to read one or two pages of their reading-book or a poem, and to draw a picture of one of the characters or some incident, etc. These drawings often show that details have escaped some readers. Many attractive reading lessons can be planned in which the responses are made by drawing something. Children enjoy any activity in which use is made of coloured crayon. (See Chapter XI.)

Many simple models can be made in the handwork lessons from written directions.

This is a good test in following written directions for children of nine and over, they must be told to think over each step as they read it, and make a mental picture of what they are going to do before they do it; otherwise no help should be given:

(1) Make a dot on the upper edge of your paper five inches from the *left* corner.

(2) Make a dot on the left edge five inches from the upper corner.

(3) Make a dot five inches below the dot on the upper edge.

(4) See if the last dot you made is five inches from the dot on the left edge.

(5) Draw a line from the dot on the upper edge to the dot you made last, just below it.

(6) Draw a line from the dot on the left edge to meet the first line you drew.

(7) Cut along the lines you have drawn. If you have no scissors, fold and tear.

What shape is the paper you have cut? If you made a mistake, go back to the first direction and find out where you went wrong. [From *English of Your Daily Life*, Book II (Longmans).]

### Arithmetic Problems for Silent

#### Reading

(1) Betty had 13 pencils. She gave 4 to Jack and 5 to Susan. Did she have any left for herself?

(2) John had eleven letters to post. He had eight  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamps. Did he have enough stamps for his letters?

(3) Mrs. Smith had two quarts of milk. She needed five pints to make ice-cream for Betty's birthday party. Did she have enough milk?

As the children get accustomed to reading problems in the silent reading periods, it will be found that their arithmetic improves. The reading helps thinking. All problems are in a sense short stories. If a child tries to understand the story, he will probably get the right answer. Only a few children visualize in their minds a problem in arithmetic.

### Puzzle Drawings to Read and Do

(1) Draw a circle. Put in it two eyes, a nose, and a mouth. Add two arms and two legs.

(2) Draw a square. Change it into a house. Draw another square, and change it into a picture.

(3) Draw four straight lines in a row, all the same length. Draw four other lines crossing. How many squares or spaces have you?

(4) Draw a triangle, and put the last three letters of the alphabet in it.

### Playing a Game from Blackboard Directions

Learning how to play a game is always enjoyed by children. When teaching a new game, sometimes write the directions on the board instead of giving them orally. In carrying out an exercise of this type, the children read the directions silently. Then the teacher chooses different groups to try out the game while the rest of the class check up their actions in the light of the blackboard directions.

Below is a set of silent reading directions for playing a game:

#### THE MORNING WALK

(1) The players are to take hands and form a ring.

(2) The teacher names one of the players to be a "proud lady" going for a walk.

(3) The "lady" walks around the outside of the circle once or twice, and taps someone on the back as she walks.

(4) The one who is tapped on the back *walks* around the circle in an opposite direction from that which the "lady" is going.

(5) When the two meet they stop,

bow, shake hands, and say "Good morning" three times. Then they walk on.

(6) The one who reaches the vacant place first is the winner. Anyone who runs or does not walk like a "proud lady" is out.

When a second set try the game, the walkers may be men hurrying to business (*not* running) or policemen. The policemen simply stop and say "Good morning" three times. The children can be asked for suggestions.

## Illustrating Compositions

A useful exercise for older children is to let them write a composition on any subject they like—a personal experience, a description of a new book, a riddle, something seen in the streets, etc. The papers are then distributed so that each child has someone else's composition to illustrate.

Each one reads the story he receives and draws a picture representing each idea in the composition which can be illustrated. The papers are then returned to their authors and each author sees how well his story has been understood and represented. Interesting discussions often arise. For example:

One boy wrote this story: "My father gave me a new penknife. It had a very sharp blade. I went about cutting everything I saw. I cut a bit off the garden fence, but Father saw me and was angry. Then I tried to cut a branch from a tree to make a walking-stick—but I broke my nice new penknife."

The child who illustrated the story drew the new penknife, the penknife open to show the blade, the garden fence, the branch of a tree, the broken penknife. The author thought the

pictures ought to show himself cutting the fence, and cutting a branch!

The above is an exercise of double value, because it furnishes a motive for clear writing as well as for careful reading.

## Making Pictures of Word Groups or Phrases

The teacher prints on the board several phrases containing words previously studied. The children draw a picture to illustrate each phrase: a basket of apples, three buns on a plate, a lion in a cage, a crow flying over a tree, four eggs in a nest, a broom in the corner, a cat under a table, a ball on the chair, a flag on a pole, jam in a jar, pins in a box, needle and thread, etc.

## Building up a Story

The teacher prints on separate strips of paper the successive sentences of a short story. The strips are then passed out to a group, each child receiving one. The children silently read their strips and receive any necessary help with new words. Then they try to build up the story. The child who thinks he has the title reads and shows his card. The one who thinks he has the first sentence of the story, reads it and stands beside the pupil with the title, so that the group can see his sentence and approve of it. The rest of the pupils look at their strips again, and the one who thinks he has the next sentence stands, and so on, until all the strips are arranged. The complete story is then read orally, each one reading his sentence in turn. If any mistakes have been made in placing the sentences, the children will probably discover it at this time.

Short stories may be typed, with each sentence on a new line. (Children in the upper classes may sometimes be asked to write these sentences.) The sentences are then cut apart, and all the slips are placed in an envelope. Groups of children may use these slips in building a story in the way described above. This material may also be used for individual work, each child building up a complete story for himself. This is a useful activity when the teacher wants to help individual children.

### Reading to Find Material to Entertain the Class

Sometimes a morning reading period may be set apart for the purpose of allowing pupils to tell interesting things which they have read in magazines, newspapers, or books. Funny stories may be used for this purpose. This encourages reading at home. More children will take part if different *rows* are given turns in being responsible for entertaining the rest.

### Substituting Words, or Finding Words that Mean the Same

This exercise is useful for increasing a child's vocabulary, as well as giving him practice in comprehensive silent reading.

The teacher selects sentences from the pages read and writes them on the board, underlining certain words for which the child is to find another word that means the same. The pupils copy the sentences, writing the substitute under the underlined word in each case, as:

He was a very idle boy.  
                                  *lazy*

The girl gathered some flowers.  
                                  *picked*

Intelligent children in the upper classes may be asked to supply two or three synonyms; this encourages the use of the dictionary.

### Book Reviews

The children are told that on a certain day they will be asked to tell about a story or a book they have read in the silent reading periods (or during a library period, or at home, according to the reading the teacher wishes to check).

When the day comes, these headings are put on the board and the pupils supply the details:

Title of the book or story.

The author's name. If this is not known, the children write *unknown*.

Did you like it? Why?

Tell something about it.

### Finding Titles or Using the Contents

Younger children often have trouble in finding a particular story in a book. They need practice in using the Contents. A "Title Race" or "Finding Titles" is a useful type of silent reading lesson.

The teacher writes several titles on the board, numbering them. The child finds the title in the Contents, finds the page, and puts a slip of paper in the place where the story is. If the slips of paper are numbered, the result of the race may easily be checked at the end of the period.

Another useful exercise that involves reading and gives practice in writing titles is to let the children look for and copy titles containing, for example, girls' names, or names of flowers, animals, etc. The children see how many titles they can find under each

heading. (For more about titles see Chapter IX.)

A similar game may be played with the vocabulary at the end of some readers. The children look through the lists to find: (1) The names of people, (2) flowers, (3) places, (4) things people can do, (5) food, etc. Each word is written as soon as it is found; the child having the longest list under any particular heading is the winner.

## Memory Tests on Silent Reading

(a) The children are told that when they have read a certain story they are going to play a game to find out how well they can remember sentences in it. When the children have had time to read the story properly, a child is asked to come out and write on the board from memory the beginning of a sentence in the story. Another pupil is then called upon to finish the sentence, thus: the first child may write on the board, "King Midas had"; then he sits down and another child comes out and completes the sentence by writing, "a little daughter called Marygold."

The stories at first must be fairly short and easy. Sentences may be accepted in which the thought is the same as that in the book, even though the wording is different.

(b) When the children have to read two or three short stories, for example fables, they often hurry over them and do not give enough thought to each one. A good way to check their power of retention is to write sentences from each story on the board. The children see if they can tell to which story each belongs. If the sentences are numbered, the child can write the number down, and by the number the title of the story. For practice in writing, the

child can write both the sentence and the title.

## FINDING THE MAIN IDEA OF A PARAGRAPH OR A TITLE FOR A PARAGRAPH

For older children one of the most valuable ways of checking silent reading, testing comprehension, and helping children to study is to let them find the main idea or topic in each paragraph. The main idea may be expressed as a sentence or title. Before children can do this, class teaching or group teaching is necessary. In every *oral* reading lesson the teacher can help the children to find the main idea or ideas in each paragraph. She helps them to find the topic sentence, and shows them that the other sentences in the paragraph explain and amplify the topic sentence. This work is especially valuable for children of ten when they are using such books as *Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, or *Water Babies*, etc. The thoughtful study of paragraphs is also a great help in reading geography and history books. (See Volume II, HISTORY.) Choosing the main idea from each paragraph shows them what to remember. Children have to be taught how to read text-books. This is too often forgotten, so that children enter the Secondary School with no idea as to how to read for information or get *facts that matter* from what they read. More about paragraphs, and the study of paragraphs, will be found in Chapters III and V. Sometimes give children a certain number of paragraphs to read.

## CHARACTERS IN A STORY AND WHAT THEY DO

An interesting test in reading that can be adapted to any age is to let the

children make a list of the characters in a story that they have just read. Under the name or by the name of each character they write some of the things which the character *did*; or sometimes for variety *said*, thus:

<i>The Ant</i>	<i>The Grasshopper</i>
gathered grains of corn	watched the ant
	laughed at him
stored them away	

Sometimes the children can be allowed to use their books for this exercise.

#### WORDS THAT DO NOT BELONG, OR THE CROSSING-OUT PUZZLE

The teacher writes on the blackboard or on cards some lists of words. Each list consists of words of the same class or kind, with one word that "does not belong." The children copy the lists, crossing out the word that is out of place or "does not belong." Below are some typical lists:

plum	cat	dress	rose
cherry	horse	shoes	violet
pear	sheep	stockings	cabbage
orange	tree	girl	bluebell
carrot	pig	hat	pansy
apple	cow	coat	pink
banana	dog	vest	sweet pea

This exercise is useful for word recognition.

#### Mixed-sentence Puzzle

Sentences with the words disarranged are written on the board or on cards. The child rearranges the words mentally and writes the sentence. This is a difficult exercise, suitable for the eight- and nine-year-olds or older pupils.

#### Answer Search (to encourage quick reading)

The teacher asks a question that is answered in a paragraph of a reader that has not been previously read. At a given signal the pupils open their books at the page named and search for the answer. As soon as a pupil finds the answer he stands up.

#### Matching Headings and Paragraphs

A series of numbered paragraphs are written on a sheet (or sheets) of paper. On another sheet are disarranged lists of appropriate titles or headings for them. The child reads the first paragraph, then looks for the appropriate title. She writes the title and puts the number of the paragraph beside it. This is repeated for the second paragraph, and so on. Cuttings from magazines, guide-books, old geography books, etc., may be used for the purpose.

#### Pairing Sentences of Similar Meaning

This test is suitable for older children. A number of sentences, say two groups of five, are written on the board. These sentences are to be paired off in groups of two, each having much the same meaning. Some of the sentences should be chosen from the class text-books and their equivalents may be made up by the teacher.

The children read through the sentences and copy them in groups of two, putting together those that mean the same:

I

- (1) The boy needed a rest after his long run.
- (2) The girl was very frightened.
- (3) The dog walked along at his master's heels.

- (4) Everyone was willing to help in the search for the missing purse.
- (5) The little girl could not get into the house.

## II

- (1) In and out, about the house, they hunted for the lost purse.
- (2) The door was locked and she could not make her mother hear.
- (3) It alarmed the girl very much.
- (4) The boy was very tired because he had run so far.
- (5) As his master walked along, the dog followed close behind him.

### Reading Test for Comprehension

There were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, all brothers, for they were the offspring of the same old tin spoon. Each man shouldered his gun, kept his eyes well in front, and wore a smart uniform of red and blue.

Who was the father of the tin soldiers?

Further suggestions for exercises in silent reading will be found in *The*

*Romance of Reading*, First Series, Books I to IV (Oxford University Press). The exercises at the end of these readers are most varied, and include handwork, geography, "detective" questions, drawing, nature study, simple rules for sentence construction, vocabulary, etc., etc. The exercises are on the lines of projects, and not formal. They show, too, the links between the different subjects, and make the children "doers."

While some groups are working these exercises or reading silently, the teacher can help the backward readers.

Besides the above books, there should be a great variety of books for silent reading. Tales about family life, especially a series of tales about the *same* family, are very popular: for example, such a series as "The Travers Series of Readers," by Phyllis Denton. There are six books about the Travers family and large illustrations that will help the reading and delight the children. They are published by Newnes Educational Publishing Co. Ltd

## CHAPTER THREE

# ORAL WORK

**P**RACTICE in oral work or oral composition is not a special subject for one lesson period, it should be taught in almost every period. Speaking and writing enter into all the subjects in the school curriculum, and improvement in English, spoken and written, should be the concern of every teacher whatever subject she teaches.

Although English spoken and written is so important in after life, often not enough time is given to it in class, since the teaching of it is confined so frequently to the English lessons only. If after a lesson, say a history story, the children were required to tell and write down one or two sentences about what they had learnt, this would help thought and expression. Too often, perhaps, in the Primary Schools the children listen to stories without having to give any response. *Children who listen do not necessarily learn.* The wireless is responsible for too much casual listening among both children and adults. Whatever lesson is given, some response should be expected from the children; this applies to all subjects. Without response the lesson may well be a wasted one. The response is often the beginning of oral composition.

### Oral Composition

The importance of oral composition can scarcely be emphasized too much. It is the foundation upon which proficiency in the writing of English must

be based. Although oral composition should very often be linked with written composition, not all oral composition need be a preliminary to written work.

In the case of very backward children it may sometimes be necessary to train them to listen to speech and then require them to repeat sentences. Some children have great language difficulties.

If we can make a child conscious of a desire to tell something and tell it well, so that his companions are interested, a very good beginning has been made. A child, as a rule, can speak at first only about his own interests and personal experiences. In some cases the teacher has to see that the dull child has some experiences. He does not want to talk, and often answers only in monosyllables.

From most children responses can be got most easily about such subjects as: Pets, My House, Things I saw coming to School, Toys, Baby Brothers or Sisters, etc.

The teacher's aim is to get from the children *sentences*, and related sentences to make a story. (The word *story* should be used as a synonym for composition.) The children are pleased to tell things about their pets if they see their sentences written on the board and the sentences growing into a story. The following is an attempt made by a teacher to get her class to tell stories about their pets in simple sentences.



Susan is rather a dull little girl of eight.

*Teacher:* Have you a pet, Susan?

*Susan:* Yes, a kitten.

*T.:* Tell us what it is like.

*S.:* Black.

*T.:* If you want to make a proper story about your kitten, you must use more than one word.

*S.:* My kitten is black [*the result of prompting*].

*T.:* What does your kitten like doing?

*S.:* Drinking milk, and it plays with its tail, and once Father trod on it.

*T.:* Now, Susan, you have told us three thoughts about your kitten. Tell them again, stop after each one, and leave out "and."

*S.:* (*with help from teacher:* It likes drinking milk. It plays with its tail. Once Father trod on it.

*T.:* Now tell your last sentence so that it will show what "it" is.

*S.:* Once Father trod on its tail, but it didn't mind.

*T.:* How many children think that Susan's story is good enough to be written on the blackboard?

[All the children think so, but one child suggests that as all kittens like drinking milk, Susan might tell something else.]

*S.:* (*pleased that her story is approved:* It likes playing with my doll.

[This the class think very interesting and want to know at once how the kitten played with the doll.]

*S.:* I make my doll dance and my kitten [*suggested by the teacher instead of "it"*] jumps at it.

The teacher then writes the story on the board, making the capitals and the full stops very deliberately, and calling attention to them. The children read the story. Then an intelligent child discovers that Susan has not told them her cat's name! The first sentence is then changed to "I have a black kitten called Tootle."

Several other stories may be developed in the same way.

Thus the children are led to express their thoughts by means of the simple sentence, and the sentence sense is cultivated. Whenever a teacher asks a child to tell one thing about her pet, and calls that one thing a sentence, she is laying the foundation of the sentence sense. Gaining the sentence sense in oral composition means gaining the ability to indicate by the sound of the voice, and by a pause, just where each sentence ends. When the teacher asks the child to tell her three things about his pet and calls these three things, three sentences, she makes it necessary for the child to count his sentences. When the teacher goes a step further and encourages him to tell these three things in such a way that the class can count them, and can be quite sure that he has given just three sentences, the teacher is helping the child to grasp what is meant by a sentence.

Often it is only by skilful questions that the teacher gets sentences from the children. The dull child likes to answer in single words, and the voluble child in a jumble of words. When a child has given a jumble of words, a question like the following will help the child to compose a little story. "Suppose you tell us, first, who Bingo is; secondly, *one* thing he does when he is naughty; and thirdly, what happens then." When the

child has thought for a few minutes he will perhaps tell the following story: "Bingo is our little dog. He jumps on the cushions with his muddy feet. Then we scold him." The children like to see their stories written on the board, or in little booklets made by themselves.

It is essential that every child should have his chance of speaking. Backward classes or children can proceed from one-sentence composition, to two-, and then to three-. There is rarely any need to limit them, but with brighter and more voluble children, it is necessary to limit the length of their stories to three or four sentences. This gives time for everyone to speak and prevents mere babbling.

Much of the fragmentary conversation that sometimes passes for oral composition is a waste of precious time. Conversation between teacher and class, if used merely to produce talk, is not always of value. It cannot be said too often that the effort to master the sentence must pervade all English work from the highest to the lowest. The foundation can be laid in the first years in the Primary School, though the child need not be able to give a definition of a sentence.

Many errors will be made in speech in these oral lessons—errors such as *I seen, I done, them books, you was*, etc., as well as words mispronounced. It is as well not to correct too many errors openly, as the children may become self-conscious. A record should be kept of mistakes and lists of sentences compiled for practice, or better still games played as suggested in the coming sections. Two or three errors may be taken every week with a class or group, and in some cases individual help given. Games are

useful, and one, perhaps, of the most effective ways of improving speech.

### Language Games and Suggestions to Correct Common Errors in Speech

Correct speech is a matter of habit and must be acquired by *practice*. Children may know why it is wrong to say *you was*, but their ear is so accustomed to it, that *you were* sounds wrong. Not rules of grammar, but *repetition* of the correct forms, is the cure. Children must hear and repeat the correct forms often enough to make them habitual.

#### A GAME FOR "WAS" AND "WERE"

One child, the Guesser, stands with his back to the class, while the rest of the class perform some simple actions. Several children can perform the same action; for example, two or three can sew, one hammer, two write, one run, and so on. When the actions have been performed, the Guesser turns round, and the game begins:

*Guesser:* Mary, were you writing?

*Mary:* No, I was not writing.

*Guesser:* Beryl, were you sewing?

*Beryl:* Yes, I was sewing.

*Sewers:* We were sewing too.

Any child who says *was* for *were* or *were* for *was* is out until another child makes a mistake; then she takes her place. When all the children have answered, a new Guesser is chosen. The Guesser keeps a record of the correct guesses to see who gets the most.

#### PRACTICE IN "I SAW" (INSTEAD OF "I SEEN")

*Teacher:* You are each going to tell me something you saw on your way to

## ORAL WORK

school this morning. Remember to answer with a sentence. Tom, begin.

Tom: I saw a coal cart.

Jane: I seen a —

All: Saw.

Jane: I saw a cat crossing the road.

(The class thought this a good sentence.)

### A GAME FOR "I AM NOT" (INSTEAD OF "AIN'T")

*The Hide-and-Seek Game.*—A child chooses a hiding-place in the room or somewhere in the school. He writes the name on a piece of paper and gives it to his teacher. When he is "hidden," the class try to guess his hiding-place. Each child asks a question in turn:

"Are you hidden in the cupboard?"

"No, I am not hidden in the cupboard."

"Are you hiding in the cloakroom?"

"No, I am not," or "No, I'm not," and so on.

If the child who is hidden makes a mistake, another takes his place.

### PRACTICE IN "DID"

Each child tells something she *did* yesterday:

"I did six sums."

"I did an errand for Mother."

Directly a child says *I done* all the class correct it, calling out "I did."

Another "Did" game is as follows: A child is chosen for a "policeman" who must walk round the class close to the wall, "his beat." While he is doing this, each child in the class performs some action—drives a nail, sews, irons, sweeps, drives a motor-car, fishes, etc. Then the policeman comes to the front of the room and the following conversation takes place:

*Policeman:* Mary, what did you do while I was walking round?

*Mary:* I did this [Mary repeats the action. If she should say *done* instead of *did*, she is out of the game].

*P.:* (trying to interpret her action): Did you sew?

*M.:* Yes, that's what I did.

If the policeman fails to guess correctly after trying twice, the child performing the unknown action becomes the policeman, and tells the work he did. He then asks another child what she did while the first policeman was walking around his beat. Every question and every answer must contain the word *did*.

Impress upon the children that they must never use *done* without *has*, *have*, or *had*, but *did* can stand alone. They must never think of *done* alone, but always as *have done*, *has done*, *had done*.

Rhymes and jingles help. Children themselves can make up little rhymes about the past forms of troublesome verbs, as:

*I did, I did, I did, I did,*

*I did my lesson today.*

*I did, I did, I did, I did,*

*And now I have time to play.*

*I did, I did, I did, I did,*

*I did two errands for Mother,*  
*etc.*

*When I have done my play,*

*I put my toys away.*

*When my work I have done*

*It is time for good fun.*

These jingles will repeat themselves in the child's mind, and help to drive out bad habits.

### THE "TO WHOM" GAME

A ball or bean bag is required for this game. One child stands in front of

the class with the ball, and says: "To whom shall I throw the ball, Molly?"

Molly replies, "Please, throw it to Joyce."

Joyce, if she catches it, comes out and says, "Mary has thrown the ball to me. To whom shall I throw it?" If she misses, the teacher chooses a child to come out. The game continues as long as desired. The children get accustomed to saying, "to whom," "shall I," and "has thrown."

A record is kept of the days on which no one misses a ball. This encourages careful play.

#### THE "DOES NOT" OR "DOESN'T" GAME

Each child writes on a piece of paper the name of an animal or bird, or creature of some kind, and on another piece of paper something it does. The animal names are put in one box and mixed; the other words, verbs, are put in another box and mixed. A child draws a word from each box, and if they happen to fit, as *dog* and *bark*, says, "A dog barks." But as a rule the words do not fit. The child then says: "A cat does not" or "doesn't bark"; or "A pig does not swim," etc. Anyone who makes a mistake and uses *don't* for *doesn't* is out of the game. This game gives good practice in writing and spelling. In the case of backward children a list of names and verbs can be put on the board for them. The child who draws two words that match is the winner.

#### ANOTHER "I SAW" GAME

The teacher tells the children to close their eyes and imagine they are at the seaside, or in the country, or at the Zoo, according to the age and personal experiences of the class. She gives them

a few minutes to think of all the things they would see in the chosen place. Then each child tells what she saw, thus:

"I saw the waves running up the beach," "I saw a boat," etc.

To encourage the children to make interesting sentences, the best ones are written on the board.

#### THE "I CAME" GAME

One child is allowed to have a flower garden, a grocer's shop, a farm, or a vegetable garden, etc. This child should stand at the front of the room. If the leader has a flower garden, he must ask each child who comes to the garden, "What did you come to my garden for?" The child answering must use the word *came*, as, "I came to get some violets."

The leader then says to the next child, "Jim came for some violets. What did you come for, Betty?" and so on.

#### "ON THE ROAD TO LONDON"

This is an interesting language game. It gives children practice in telling stories in three sentences. The first player says: "On the road to London I saw a —," naming an animal. The second player, who did not of course know what animal was to be named, immediately tells what the animal was doing; the third player tells what happened then. The fourth player repeats the whole story. The fifth player begins a new story.

The game perhaps will go like this:

*1st Child:* On the road to London I saw a dog.

*2nd Child:* He was barking at a little girl.

*3rd Child:* I drove the dog away to please the little girl.

*4th Child:* On the road to London I saw a dog. He was barking at a little girl. I drove the dog away to please the little girl.

The children who have to repeat the whole story must not join the sentences. Anyone who makes a mistake or cannot give a proper sentence drops out.

## SELF-HELP SENTENCE BOOKS

Lists of sentences should be made for all the common errors to do with the verb forms *to be*, *to go*, *to see*, *to do*, *to come*, *to run*, *to bring*, etc.

Let the children make "Self-help Sentence Books," in which they write about five sentences for each difficult verb form. These they read to each other from time to time and say to the class. They like to enter examples of very short sentences that they can repeat, thus:

I did; You did; He did; She did; We did; You did; They did. They do the same with "I have done."

Through their oral composition and games the children get quite a good idea of the *verb* and *noun*. It seems quite natural to children that words should have names, as well as flowers. The children should never be worried with definitions, but the natural use of words such as *noun*, *verb*, *adjective*, *pronoun*, is a great help to teachers and children.

Children collect sentences for all their common errors. They can keep verb forms in one "Self-help Sentence Book," and have a second book for other mistakes; for example, *these*, *those*, and *them*, as:

I shall buy one of *those* books. *Those* apples are the ones I like, not *these*.

Jack left *those* tools outside, but I brought *them* in.

Other words for which sentences can be made: *is* and *are*, *may* and *can*, *teach* and *learn*, etc. They must keep their ears open in the oral lessons for mistakes. These "Self-help Sentence Books" become very popular, and the children enjoy collecting sentences.

## "HAVE YOU?" OR "HAVEN'T YOU?" GAME

Choose a pupil to be Guesser and allow him to stand outside until called into the room. Some small object chosen before the Guesser left the room is hidden by giving it to some child to hold in his hand, so that it cannot be seen. The children must agree not to look towards the person who holds the object, as this will help the Guesser.

The Guesser has to find who has the object by asking questions beginning with either "Have you" or "Haven't you." The Guesser must be very careful not to use *got* and not to use two negatives in asking the questions. The pupils answering must be equally careful. They must reply, "No, Tony, I haven't the rubber," or "Yes, Tony, I have the rubber," as the case may be. When the Guesser is successful, a new one is chosen.

## "AS" AND "LIKE"

For a game a leader is chosen. He comes out and performs some action. He then calls upon a pupil to repeat his action, saying, "Tony, do as I did."

Tony performs the action and says, "I did just as you did."

*Leader:* Mary, hop across the room as I did.

*Mary* (when she has finished): I hopped across the room as you did.

*Leader:* No, Mary, you did not do exactly as I did . . . etc.

When a leader makes a mistake, another takes his place.

Even before children know much about the structure of a sentence (see Chapter V), they may be led to understand that these sentences are correct:

Susan looks *as if* she wants to cry.

Fred looks *like* his father.

But not:

Susan looks *like* she wants to cry.

Help them to see that when *like* is the word to use, it must be followed by the *name* of a person or thing, but when it is followed by a statement, such as "she wanted to cry," *as* or *as if* should be used.

Susan looks *as if* she wants to cry.

Point out that "she wants to cry" is very much like a little sentence, and they must never use *like* before anything which seems like a sentence, only before the name of some object.



[Courtesy of Messrs. Creamola Food Products Ltd.]

Fig 14 —PICTURE FOR ORAL DESCRIPTION

## Suggestions for Varied Oral Composition Lessons

### PICTURES

These can be used in a variety of ways. A number of small pictures are often better than one large picture. Suitable advertisements cut out and mounted are useful for class work and group work. Each child can have a picture to study, and then tell something about it. If one picture is used, ideas concerning it are often exhausted in five minutes. There is generally nothing left for the slow child to say! The following are the chief ways of using pictures:

(1) *Describing a Picture.*—The children are encouraged to provide descriptive sentences. This exercise requires little imagination. It is especially useful for the slow type of child, and helps their vocabulary (see Chapter V). It sometimes leads to feeble sentences, especially if the child is told to tell *all* he sees in the picture; for example, "I see a cat." "The cat has four paws." "I see its claws," etc. When each child has his own picture, more interesting sentences are generally obtained. These are some sentences given by children who had the picture shown in Fig. 14 (the advertisement for Creamola):

"My picture shows a happy little girl. She has eaten all the pudding."

"I have a picture of a little girl scraping a pie-dish. It must have contained something good."

Some sentences are so interesting that all the class want to see the picture. These pictures are pinned on the board, and the sentences printed underneath.

The children like to discuss the pictures and sentences after the lesson. Some children get so interested that

they cut out similar pictures from newspapers at home and make picture-books, writing a sentence under each picture (see Chapter VI).

Fig. 15 (Horlicks advertisement) shows a more difficult picture. The following sentences were given by a child of nine: "My picture is a picture of autumn. I know it is autumn because the leaves are falling. A man is sweeping up the leaves. I can see a bonfire."

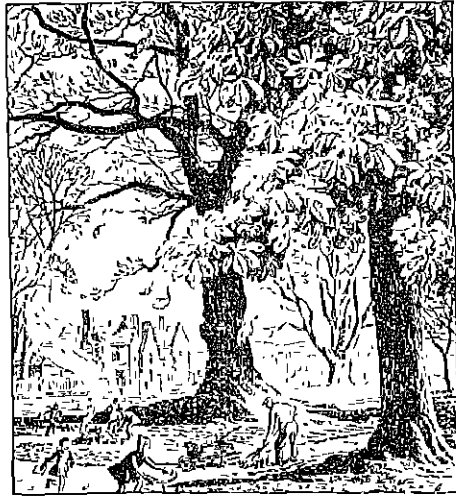
Sometimes two children can share a picture such as Fig. 15, and help each other to make sentences.

(2) *Telling the Story Suggested by the Picture.*—This is more difficult. A large picture is used if it is to be a class story built up by the class.

Here the child has to use his imagination and make the people in the picture come alive, as it were. When the children are telling a *story*, they should not be allowed to get into the habit of telling merely what they see in the picture. If little ones are required to tell appropriate stories about a picture such as Fig. 16, a sentence such as this should not be accepted—"This is a picture of two little children and a rabbit." It is easy to get the children on the right track by saying, "Yes, we know that. Let us begin the story by saying who the children are, and how they got their rabbit."

Sentences like these may result: "Peter and Jane [there is generally much discussion about choosing names] had a pet rabbit called Whiskers. Uncle Tom gave it to them. It was a birthday present," etc.

Details seen in the picture are worked into the story—a description of the hutch, the rabbit, and its food, etc. Then, still using their imagination, they can tell about an adventure of the



[Courtesy of Messrs. Horlicks Ltd.]

Fig. 15—PICTURE FOR ORAL DESCRIPTION.

rabbit. These oral stories are best developed as *class stories*. Children enjoy building them up, and seeing the sentences grow in number on the blackboard. They read the story to see that it is told in sentences. When a child reads the sentences, he and the class understand that his voice must show where each sentence ends, just as the full stops show it on the blackboard. This helps punctuation.

(3) Another interesting exercise is to read to the children a short description of a picture (if possible, write it also on the board) *before* they see the picture. Tell the children, in some cases, to close their eyes and try to see the picture as they listen to the words:

## A PICTURE (Chart IV)

"A boy is standing on a swing which hangs from the branch of a tall tree. He has twined his arms around the ropes so that he will not fall. In one hand he holds a small bowl. In the

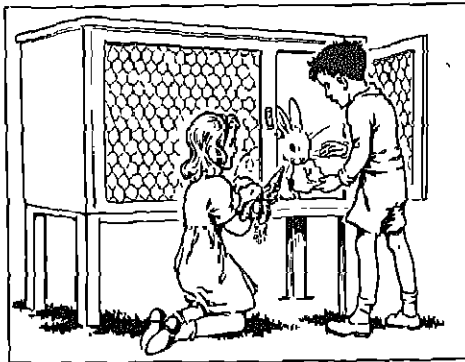


Fig. 16—PICTURE FOR STORY-TELLING.

other is a clay pipe with which he is blowing soap bubbles. The bubbles float lazily in the air. A little, hairy black dog, as light as a soap bubble, is trying to get into the swing."—HANS ANDERSEN.

Show the children the picture. Are the drawing and the word-picture identical? Are both pictures perfectly clear? Which is the clearer? Does the artist's picture tell you anything that you do not understand in the word-picture?

The older pupils, especially, can try to describe, in the same clear way as the model, any pictures that are available. It adds to the interest if the same pictures are used for story-telling. Remind the children that in describing a picture they can tell only what they *actually see* in the picture; but in telling a story all sorts of interesting things can be added, as, why the boy is blowing soap bubbles in so inconvenient a position.

Here is the story of the picture (Chart IV). Notice the title:

#### "SCAMP AND THE SOAP BUBBLES"

"The sun was shining brightly when Jack went into the garden to blow soap

bubbles. He carried his bowl of soapy water and his clay pipe very carefully. As it was a hot day he meant to have a lazy time sitting on the grass and watching the fairy-like bubbles he blew float up in the air. But with him came his little dog Scamp. Scamp had black, soft, wavy hair and seemed as light as a soap bubble. Directly his master blew the first bubble Scamp pounced upon it and burst it. He was so quick and clever that he burst bubble after bubble. He thought it was a fine new game. But Jack was not going to blow bubbles for the pleasure only of Master Scamp. He climbed into his swing, which was a high one, and standing on it with his arms twined round the ropes, he was able to blow his bubbles and watch them sail safely away. They were too high for Scamp to reach. He could only bark at them and try to climb into the swing. When he got tired of doing this, he went away to doze in the sun until his master called him home to tea."

Let the children tell what is *imagined* in the story that is not shown in the picture. Let the children make a list of the points in the story which *cannot* be told in the picture, for example, the names of the boy and dog, the reason why he is standing in the swing, etc.

It is a good plan with older children to choose a picture and ask half of the class to describe it, and the other half to tell a story about it.

(4) Let the children find and bring to school any interesting pictures. They can cut them from newspapers or magazines. The suitable ones are put in a special box. Remind the children to bring simple pictures about which they think they can tell a story, otherwise one gets a great number of useless pic-



tures. When the box contains a good selection, each pupil takes a picture and describes it, the rest may decide if the description is good, that is, if it tells clearly what is seen in the picture. Later each picture is mounted on a sheet of paper and a story written about it (see Written Composition). The best stories may be pinned on the board or pasted in a class Picture Story-book. (For further use of pictures see Chapter V.)

## TELLING STORIES WITHOUT THE AID OF PICTURES OR QUESTIONS

When children have gained some skill in talking about pictures or topics suggested by the teacher, or by themselves, in which she draws out the content of the stories by questions, some of the children will be ready to tell original stories. In this exercise the child must decide for himself what to tell about; select the material and arrange it in the best way without the help of the teacher. It is important that all stories be kept short, one-paragraph stories. The stories are to be original stories, not reproductions of other stories, and the teacher may find it necessary to suggest a number of different subjects in order to call to the child's mind some *experience* that they will enjoy telling, for example:

Something that made them very happy. Something that happened on the way to or from the school, at market or in other places. Surprises they have had. Things they have lost or found (very popular). Their favourite toy. Some bird or animal they have watched and can tell about. *Home Experiences*: How I help Mother to wash the dishes. My Saturday. My Last Birthday. My Week-end, etc.

Some children, especially the voluble type of child, tend to choose from their experiences stories of accidents, fights, and other similar unpleasant happenings. Lead the children to tell about things that made them happy, or made other people happy, pleasant sights seen, shop windows, gardens, parks, etc.

## *Finding Titles*

Finding titles is not an easy matter. In the lowest classes, it is wisest to let the children tell their stories without titles, or to require only a simple statement, such as, "I am going to tell you about a ball that I lost." This statement makes the best approach to a real title. "The Ball I Lost" can be lifted bodily from the statement to form a title when later the children write their stories (see Chapter IV; and for more about titles, Chapter IX). Again, the children must be reminded to tell their stories in sentences. Insist sometimes on a story of four sentences. The bright child sees that to begin his story with, "I have a rabbit," or "I am going to tell you about my rabbit," takes him nowhere. A better beginning sentence would be, "I am going to tell you about a clever trick of my rabbit, Peter." Everyone wants to hear this story.

A good exercise for quick children is to give them the opening sentence of a short story, or the key sentence, and ask them to finish the story in three or four sentences:

(a) One night we left the window open.

(b) John had been told not to play with his new ball in the house.

(c) It was Betty's birthday.

(d) One day a little kitten ran away from its mother.

### DESCRIBING ACTIONS PERFORMED IN FRONT OF THE CLASS

It sometimes helps backward children in oral expression to let certain pupils perform some actions, such as working a sum on the board, tying up a parcel, filling a fountain-pen, etc. In the case of older children a simple experiment can be performed. A child then tells exactly what he has seen in good sentences. The use of *I saw* at the beginning of the sentence will tend to remind careless speakers not to use *I seen*.

### DESCRIPTIONS—RIDDLES

The children describe common objects, animals, or creatures, people, the postman, etc., without mentioning names. The class have to guess who or what it is. The children can, if they like, imagine themselves animals, fruits, useful objects in the school, etc.; then they describe themselves. *No one must guess or interrupt until the description is complete.* The teacher should herself first make up a riddle for the children to guess, or read one to them, so that they will know what to aim at. Here is one that children enjoy:

#### "WHAT IS MY NAME?"

"Now I will tell you all I know about myself, and you must tell me my name. I am light and soft, my colour is light brown, and I am full of holes. I do not eat at all, but I drink a great deal. Water is my chief drink, but I do not object to milk, or any other fluid. When you wish me to drink anything, you must put me into it, as I have no mouth. If I am ever so full, you have only to squeeze me and I am thirsty again. I bear a good deal of rough usage, but it is not easy to hurt me. If you cut me in two, I do not feel it."

Description is perhaps the most difficult form of composition. In the Primary School only the simple descriptions that the child actually needs should be attempted, that is, descriptions of everyday *things* around him.

Another useful exercise in description is to let children bring toys and other interesting things to school and keep them out of sight until they have described them to the class. The toy (or whatever it is) is then unwrapped and the class can decide whether the description was good or not.

### RETELLING SHORT STORIES

Very short stories must be chosen, so that as many children as possible have a chance of retelling them. *Æsop's* fables are very useful. Short stories made up by the teacher are valuable, because she can introduce words that children mispronounce, and sentences that give the pupils practice in the right use of words often wrongly used (see the first part of this chapter).

Retelling stories is naturally linked with the reading lesson. (See Chapters I and II.) Children can sometimes be asked to retell a story that they have read and studied for the purpose.

The teacher should appreciate both the limitations and the advantages of this kind of exercise. In reproducing the thoughts of another, a pupil is required neither to select his own subject nor to arrange his thoughts. The ideas to be expressed are provided, and if the matter is worth reproducing, the order of the ideas cannot be changed in any important way without spoiling the story. For this reason retelling a story cannot be considered a substitute for original story-telling. It is only an aid to original composition.

Rightly handled, the exercise has these advantages:

(1) The story to be retold furnishes a model both of sentence structure and of arrangement of ideas. Thus it gives the pupil experience in telling a story in a more finished way than is possible in his own original work.

(2) It increases and improves the vocabulary of the pupil, *if* he appropriates the words of the author. It is unwise to ask a child to reproduce a story *in his own words*, to let him alter the order of events if the order is right, or to let him reproduce stories faulty in structure.

(3) It increases facility in pronunciation and in the use of the English idiom and English sentence.

(4) It develops power to hold to a train of thought and exercises the memory.

*Retelling a Story by the Question and Answer Method.*—This method is generally employed when children are questioned about stories they have read or heard, or about stories they have read in the silent reading period. The teacher (having the story well in mind) asks questions whose answers retell the story, errors being corrected where necessary. As a rule the questions deal with single-thought units, and for this reason this method is good with young children and backward children. The teacher should aim at getting clear-cut sentences in reply to her questions. Sometimes several children should be called upon to answer the same question, and the best answer chosen by the teacher with the help of the children.

*Retelling a Story by the Topic or Paragraph Method.*—This time, when the children have read a story, the teacher points out that it is divided into

several parts or paragraphs. With the help of the teacher, the children decide what each part is about. One cannot expect at first much help from the children in finding and naming the different paragraphs. It is often best for the teacher to tell what each part is about, and then to say:

"Nancy, you tell where the Rabbit lived." "Marjorie, you tell what Mr. and Mrs. Rabbit were talking about," and so on. Let the children chosen think for a few minutes, and then ask each to tell her part of the story. The other children should be on the alert to notice if anything important is left out; the most conspicuous mistakes should be corrected. One or two other groups may follow, each group trying to improve the retelling, *but*, as soon as interest flags the retelling should be stopped. Longer stories mean that more children can take part. The number of the parts does not matter very much. Take such a story as "The Three Bears." This is better for topic reproduction than many shorter stories because the episodes stand out so clearly.

Discussing the different paragraphs, telling stories by paragraphs or episodes (each child taking one), is especially valuable in upper classes. The oral work in the lower classes prepares for this. For more about paragraphs see Chapter V.

*Changing the View-point of a Story.*—A useful exercise in upper classes. The story of "The Fox and the Grapes" can be translated into a modern story of "Sour Grapes" by making a lady pass a hat shop, admire a pretty hat, go in and ask the price, and then, when she finds it too dear, declare that it would not suit her.

Children are interested in thinking out new versions of this fable and others. Here are more for "Sour Grapes": (1) The Cow and the Clover Field. (2) A Little Girl and the Doll in a Shop Window. (3) A Boy and a Football Team. (4) Jane and the Sweet Shop.

#### DRAMATIZATION

Dramatization is very familiar as a means of oral English. It includes miming and puppetry. Miming must be closely linked with oral work. It can be used to make clear words, phrases, and sentences. Miming is dealt with in Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work. Puppetry is of value only if the children think about what they are going to say and speak carefully. So many puppet plays are merely opportunities for impromptu slang and much laughter. In an overcrowded time-table puppet plays must fully justify their use or go.

##### *Dramatization of a Word or Phrase.*

—Daily, in connection with the reading lessons, will arise opportunities for bits of dramatic interpretation. Perhaps the following words and phrases may appear in the reading lessons: (1) Galloping. (2) The butterfly *hovered* round the flower. (3) She hunted everywhere. (4) Then the wolf was very angry and he growled. There are always some children eager to come out and show what the author meant by the words. The opportunities for thus testing the children's power to read, power to interpret, and power to express themselves are endless.

The acting of simple stories worth remembering, and parts of stories that are of literary value, as well as historical scenes, are well worth while. These are

dealt with in detail in Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work, and in Volume II, History. This acting helps the children to use and understand many new words. Little plays can be made up by the children in connection with their reading. It is a good incentive to reading to ask them to read two or three short stories to see if they are suitable to act.

Perhaps most valuable of all is the dramatization of everyday happenings, so as to correct errors in speech and pronunciation. Some of the language games already mentioned involve acting, and other similar ones can be invented.

#### TELEPHONING

Telephone conversations are of great value. Children enjoy learning how to use a telephone, and how to look up numbers in a directory. Old copies of directories can generally be obtained. The telephone conversations will vary with the age of the children.

*A Telephone Game.*—The class is divided into groups of two. These groups are given a short time to decide what characters they are going to represent when they telephone. When they have all decided, the telephoning can begin. While two are telephoning, the other children listen carefully. If anyone hears a word mispronounced or an incorrect sentence, etc., he calls out, "You are cut off," and he and his partner come out and telephone.

Here are some suggestions for telephone conversations: (1) An invitation to tea. (2) Asking for information about trains. (3) Ordering goods from a shop. This is a specially useful conversation. In ordering foods, etc., the children can choose words that need special practice,

for example, words beginning with *p*, as *potatoes*, *prunes*, *parsley*, etc.

A number of useful exercises, and a very varied list of telephone conversations, etc., will be found in *English of Your Daily Life*, Book III, Chapter 24; "Our Friend the Telephone," and Book IV, *Talking by Telephone* (Longmans). These exercises, and telephone conversations in general, will give the children a good deal of necessary everyday knowledge. They are well suited for group work with backward children.

## DIRECTIONS, OR TELLING HOW TO DO THINGS

This is a very valuable form of oral work. Many people cannot give directions, and perhaps still fewer can follow them. The children can tell how they made a simple toy, how to make tea, how to lay the table for tea, how to play a game, or how to reach the post-office or bus from school, etc.

Then the children themselves can give directions. First, simple directions for doing something in the classroom, for example, finding something that has been hidden. A child says, "I have lost a thimble. It is not in my desk. Look on the second shelf in the cupboard. On the right is a box. See if it is in the box."

Is the shelf the second from the top or the bottom? This is a valuable exercise, also, because of the use of *right* and *left*.

Some directions will include drawings. These should sometimes be given by the teacher; for example, "Draw a plan of the schoolroom on the board. Mark in the windows and door, and put a cross where you sit." When the room has been successfully drawn, the children take it in turns to add other

directions for completing the plan; for example, "Show where the cupboard is." "Show if the cupboard door is open or shut." "Mark the position of the blackboard," etc.

Children often think out directions for simple drawings: "Draw a little circle. Draw a bigger circle underneath it and touching it. Draw a third circle underneath the second and touching it. Put a hat on the little circle. Draw eyes, nose, mouth, and arms where you think they ought to be. What have you drawn?"

Backward children can give and follow only very simple directions, such as: "Draw a line four inches long. Draw a cross in the middle of the line." One step or two steps are often all that they can follow.

The following directions, that involve little problems in arithmetic, are valuable:

Draw a large square for Jack's garden. (The class are often very critical about the drawing of the square.) In Jack's garden there are three rows of lettuces with five plants in each row. Draw these plants. Write in under the drawing the number of lettuces in the garden.

Draw three shelves. Put two pots of jam on the left-hand side of the top shelf, three bags of flour in the middle of the second shelf, and two big bowls on the right-hand side of the third shelf. How many things are on the shelves?

## ASKING AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS

(a) Let the children sometimes question each other on a short story read. Encourage the children to think of good questions that require thought, and not merely the answers *yes* or *no*.

Not only the child questioned but all the pupils listen carefully to the question, so that they can decide if it is a worthwhile question clearly expressed.

(b) Instead of asking questions about stories read, each child asks any question he likes. But if no one in the class can answer it, *he must answer it or bring the answer next time.*

The questions must be well expressed and asked clearly and slowly. Good pronunciation is important, because the questions can be about any topic. In the case of questions on a story read, the children have some *clues* to the questions, and therefore hear more easily. Here are some examples of questions asked by children:

John is eighteen. His sister Mary is twenty-three. How much older is Mary than John?

What is the capital of (a) England, (b) Scotland, (c) Ireland?

Name two things that the sun gives us.

Where does the sun rise?

Divide 23 buns among 7 boys. How many buns will each boy get? How many buns are over?

If you travelled very far north, what would you come to?

If you were a fairy with wings, what place would you like to visit, and why?

What is an oasis?

Tom and Betty were playing dominoes. Betty won. Tom said dominoes were stupid. What fable ought Tom to read?

It is wise to encourage the children to ask questions on every subject.

Questions and answers in arithmetic are especially valuable, as often language difficulties hinder progress in this subject. It is helpful if children get familiar with words such as *multiply, divide, subtract, remainder*, etc. "To be good at English" means, in a sense, to be good at every subject. Both teachers and children need to be reminded of the value of language.

Children enjoy the "Question Period," which can take place once a week or once a fortnight. In this activity both parents' and teachers' aid is sought, and reading material used. A record of really good questions on each subject or on general knowledge is worth keeping. It is often stimulating to the class (especially if the children are of about the same mental ability) if the teacher keeps a record of the number of questions answered by each child. But no *public* record should be kept if it means accentuating the difference between dull children and bright children.

#### PROJECTS AND ORAL WORK

The connections between oral English and projects is very obvious. Children talk best about what they are most interested in. How conversation leads to projects and projects lead to conversation will be seen in such books as *Projects for the Junior School*, Books I to IV (Harrap), and *English of Your Daily Life*, Books I to IV (Longmans). See also the coming chapters on projects, especially Chapter IX.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# SPELLING AND WRITING

**S**PELLING is necessary for writing. In order to express one's thoughts well, the words must flow from one's pen without any effort, without having to stop and think "How does one spell this word?" A limited spelling vocabulary means a limited power of written expression.

Spelling must be taught. Bright children "pick up" spelling, but the majority do not, they need teaching. Like reading, spelling must be the concern of *every teacher*. In the nature-study lessons, in the history lessons, etc., any new words must be taught. If this is done in a systematic way, children are not faced one day with a host of words that they cannot spell. It is a good plan to leave new words on the blackboard for a few days, or on a notice-board. Word books should be made for each subject (for history word books see the History Section, etc.). All the weight of teaching spelling must not lie on the English lessons. The recognition by *all* teachers of spelling as an accessory skill will do much to remove the many complaints heard when pupils pass to the Secondary Schools. Here, again, in the Secondary Schools all new words must be taught.

The modern methods of teaching spelling are very different from those of the past, when children learnt long lists of words unrelated to their daily needs. No teacher now spends time on words

that children may not want for many years, if at all—on the other hand, it must be remembered that children love unusual words.

It is beginning to be realized, too, today that spelling helps reading (see Chapter I), and weak readers deprived of spelling lessons are often doubly handicapped.

If possible there should be, at first, short daily lessons in spelling, using the lists compiled from the words needed by the children in the different lessons, and from their reading books, and so on. Later on, with the brighter children one or two lessons only may be needed. The words should be taught *in columns*, as they are more quickly learnt than when studied in phrases or sentences. When the child sees the *one* word alone he can concentrate his attention on it rather than spread it over many words.

With weak spellers words are best taught in *short* columns of three or four words on the basis of similarity of structure (see the Word Families in Chapter I); for example, the *sea ea* words, *eat, beat, tea, read*; the *corn or* words, *corn, horn, torn, corner, horse*, and so on; the *soap oa* words, *boat, goat, toast*, and so on. Very weak spellers and backward readers will begin with easy families, like *ball, fall*, etc., or *sing, king*, etc.

Homonyms, words of similar sound and different spelling, should be pur-

posely kept apart and ignored for the time.

For variety, and for brighter children, the words to be taught can be associated with a particular activity or event of everyday life, or some particular object; for example, playtime, washing, pets, breakfast-time, and so on (see *English of Your Daily Life*, Book I (Longmans)). Some children like to collect and learn all the words to do with arithmetic.

When the list to be learnt is arranged, there are different methods of teaching the words, according to the ability of the children. The detailed method described here is for backward children. Bright children need only to *hear* the word, say it correctly, look at it, read it, spell it to themselves, write it from memory. Obviously, beforehand, explanatory phrases or sentences are used orally by the teacher to emphasize the use and meaning of the words.

For backward children the word to be learnt should first be read by the teacher, and then said by individual children, care being taken to see that correct pronunciation and enunciation are obtained. One of the common causes of poor spelling is mispronunciation and slovenly speaking; for example, *library*, *chimley*, etc. Children often write words correctly when the teacher dictates them because they hear the right sounds, but when they write their compositions, they sound the words themselves and spell accordingly—incorrect auditory images prompt incorrect spelling.

The child must look at the word before the teacher says it and when he says it. Insist that children look at the word from left to right. This is as essential in spelling as it is in reading. It

will do much to prevent the difficulty of letter and word reversals.

When the words have been correctly said and looked at, the children spell the words aloud, letter by letter, and again by syllables (in the case of disyllabic or polysyllabic words—*cap-i-tal*, *dis-ap-pointed*, *break-fast*, etc.). Call attention to such difficulties as silent letters, double letters, or other difficult combinations, or difficult parts of words; for example, *separate*. *Separate* means cut into *parts*, *part* and *separate* each contain *par*. Draw attention to the *ar* in *parade*. Again, *supreme* can be compared with *extreme*, *although* with *also* (see Word Building Section). Write the word again on the board for the children. The children look steadily at it for a few minutes. Then they close their eyes and “see” the word. Those who cannot “see” the word are allowed to look again. When they can “see” the word in their minds, they write it from memory three times in their best handwriting. With backward children it may be necessary for them to trace over the word with a pencil or their finger, spelling it aloud before they can memorize it.

Hearing, looking, reading, writing must all play their part in learning to spell. Just as it helps backward readers “to trace” and sound words when learning to read, so it helps them when learning to spell.

### Making Their Own Spelling Books

Besides making spelling books for particular subjects, such as nature study, geography, handwork, etc. (see these sections), each pupil should have a booklet which he keeps for his own mistakes. These are entered in alpha-



betical order. In the drawing lesson a pattern can be made for the cover (see Fig. 17). These words can be tested from time to time, and when they are known crossed out. Small booklets are best, as they can be kept up to date easily. Any words still not known are transferred to the new book.

A useful exercise in *visualization* for children who are making good progress is to write three or four words on the board in a column. Let the children look at them for a few minutes. Then a word is rubbed out and a child is called upon to spell and write the missing word. Later, two words are rubbed out. In this exercise the child does not *hear* the sound of the word he has to write. This exercise can be used for testing words already learnt (see coming paragraph on testing).

Exercises should also be given sometimes to make children look at letters *irrespective of sound*. Give them some columns of words, and tell them to read them down and copy the pairs of words which contain the same *two* or more letters next to each other and in the same order:

<i>there</i>	receipt	ceiling
<i>where</i>	fierce	<i>thistle</i>
flies	cheat	bough
fresh	wrap	ghost
<i>whisper</i>		thing
head		from
ring		happen
blood		blow

This is a difficult exercise unless the children look at the letters carefully, but they enjoy it because it is of the nature of a puzzle.

As far as possible, one must try "to make correct spelling a matter of deep

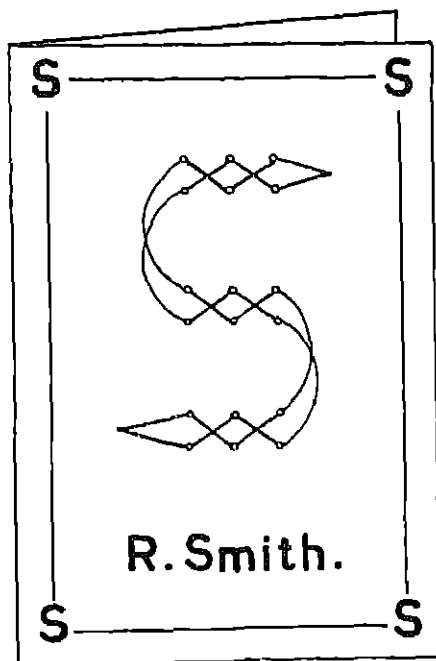


Fig. 17.—COVER FOR SPELLING BOOK.

concern" to the children, so that they are willing to go to the inconvenience of consulting a dictionary or making inquiries rather than write words incorrectly. It is chiefly in the upper classes that this "word conscience" can be developed. The use of a dictionary must be encouraged as soon as possible. The approach to the dictionary, arranging words in dictionary order, etc., is dealt with in Chapter VII.

## Testing

(1) The children try to write the words learnt from memory. This is a difficult test for backward readers. They have to think of the words themselves, as well as spell them.

(2) Pupils can hear each other spell the particular groups of words upon which they are working.

(3) A test for backward spellers to be given by the teacher: (a) Say the word to the children clearly. Use the word in a sentence and say it again. The pupils should say the word softly to themselves, think how it is spelt, and then write it. Each child should correct his own paper. It helps them to see their own mistakes. Never let them exchange papers. There should be no competition to see who gets most words right, and therefore no cheating. The goal of each child is to know the words and beat his last record. Misspelt words are written correctly in their spelling books.

(b) Perhaps the best method of testing spelling is to let the children use the words in sentences at the end of each week. At the end of a longer period, three or four weeks, a story, conversation, or description, etc., can be written, reviewing the words. Spelling is necessary only because of written intercourse, therefore the written appeal must be considered the most important form of spelling drills and tests. Only when the child, intent on a sentence or intent on a written message, writes the word correctly from force of habit is he really giving evidence of his mastery over the word. Oral tests are not of much value.

(c) Spelling games and contests, etc., should be used with great care. When a game or contest becomes an end in itself, or when it increases the achievement of one pupil to the discouragement of many, it is of doubtful value. Spelling games and contests rarely help weak spellers.

(d) Dictation is a good exercise for testing spelling if the words are given in sentences, brief, and with a worthy content. Certain short passages worth remembering are worth dictating. Dic-

tation also encourages careful listening. It is not a method of teaching spelling, but a method of testing *words learnt*.

Very useful graded dictation tests will be found in *Essentials in Teaching and Testing Spelling*, by Fied J. Schonell (Macmillan). Burt's *Graded Spelling Vocabulary Test* is also useful for spelling tests.

Bought spelling books are of doubtful value. They tend to make the spelling lessons something quite apart from the other lessons. A series of words unrelated to the work the children are doing dissipates their energy. If the spelling lists are made by the teacher, she can add, from time to time, words that are somewhat technical and are needed in the written work of some particular subject, as well as more ordinary words. In a word, she can adjust her list to the needs of her children. The spelling lists should bring out the relationship of the work in spelling to the written work in other subjects.

But bought spelling books are sometimes useful in suggesting the grouping of more common words. Teachers will find Fied J. Schonell's *The Essential Spelling List: 3200 Everyday Words Selected, Graded, and Grouped according to Common Difficulty* (Macmillan, 1938) very helpful.

### Writing and Spelling

As soon as possible children should be taught cursive handwriting. Just as cursive handwriting helps reading, so it will be found to help spelling. In printing, children are much more likely to transpose the separate letters. When once children have learnt cursive handwriting there is no need for them to have separate writing lessons. The *spelling lesson* is the *writing lesson*.

Children realize how important it is to write well. They can see the direct negative results of letters not formed properly. Again, the teaching of writing must be shared by all. Each teacher, whatever her subject, must see to it. Children tend to keep their best writing for the writing or spelling lessons.

## Hints on Teaching Cursive Writing

In cursive handwriting there are some common types of illegibility. It is important to point these out to the children, and to explain how to guard against them. Remind the children

(1) To close the *a* at the top, and the *d* at the bottom. Both these letters are written very much in the same way.

(2) The final loop of the *a* comes down to the line, while that of the *o* must end on *top*.

(3) One should be able to see through the loop of the *e*.

(4) Dot the *i* and cross the *t*; make a long narrow loop to the *l*, but no loop for *t*, *b*, or *h*. Mind the little shelf in *b*.

(5) Over, over, over with the letter *m*; over, over with the letter *n*.

(6) Under, under with the letter *u*; under, under with the letter *w*, then up and make a little table.

(7) The *e* is only half as tall as the *l*, and the *r* should have a roof.

(8) *f* has a long straight back like *l*, but it goes below the line.

Children enjoy practising these letters and saying the rules. Let them find words containing these letters to practise as: *meiry*, *clever*, *add*, *over*, *nine*, *moments*. The children select words from their own spelling books to practise. If the children know some

writing rules, they can practise their writing at odd moments; for example, when the register is being marked, etc.

Give the children words from written work in other subjects. Let the children write paragraphs, using a few sentences only, indenting, and giving the proper spacing. The copy should be put on the board for them. Children like to copy interesting proverbs, rhymes, verses, etc. Sometimes they can practise writing dates. Here is a copy that gives the children much pleasure. It brings in unusual letters and the use of quotation marks.

## THE BEES THAT WENT UP TO THE SKY

*Fuzzy Wuzz, Buzzy Wuzz, Zippety  
Flop,*

*All flew up to the cherry-tree top.*

*"Pooh!" said Buzzy Wuzz, "this  
isn't high!*

*Let us keep on till we reach the sky."*

Short periods, not longer than ten minutes, are best for writing practice, and as far as possible writing should be associated with spelling.

But apart from special lessons and practice in connection with cursive writing, the children need to write a good deal before they master the mechanics of writing. However, extra practice can be obtained in connection with projects and other activities. Purposeful activity, it has been said, is the great yardstick of writing as well as reading. Children enjoy making little booklets about things that interest them. The booklet idea, frequently mentioned in the different sections of these volumes, will be found of great value. Little booklets can be made from pieces of paper 10 in. by 7½ in. folded in half. The writing in them may be done in pencil. Children

enjoy making a "Toy Booklet." They draw or paste in a picture of a toy, write in the name under, and a sentence. Fig. 18 shows a page from such a booklet. The children write well, because they want to make a pretty book to show to their mothers or to give to a baby brother or sister. Children of seven and eight also like to make a class toy book. Each child does a page for it. This time the drawings are done by the children in the art lesson. The result is often a book of pleasing pictures and good writing. Many of the sentences, too, prove interesting.

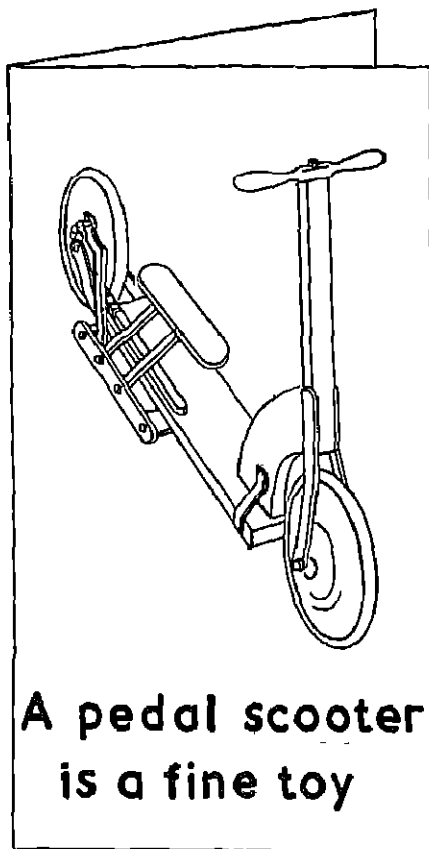


Fig. 18.—TOY BOOKLET.

Other subjects that young children like to make booklets about are:

- (1) Pets.
- (2) Things I Do at School—I read many books, I write, and so on. Drawings of stick figures improve the page.
- (3) Action Word Book (see Chapter I).
- (4) Things I Do at Home.
- (5) What the Baker Sells.
- (6) What We Buy at the Sweet Shop.
- (7) Animals (Our Animal Friends).
- (8) Picture Book—name or sentence written under each picture.
- (9) Word Book—words I know.
- (10) Capital Letter Book (sentences beginning with capitals—good for beginners).
- (11) Directory, of pupils in the room, or "Telephone Directory" for telephone game.
- (12) Daily Workers (see Fig. 19)—a list of daily workers, postman, baker, milkman, etc., with a sentence about each. This is a valuable book, and encourages thought and observation.
- (13) Things I Wear.
- (14) Dog Days—pictures of dogs with labels, name, descriptive sentence. This is a very popular booklet, because little pictures of dogs' heads or dogs can be collected from newspapers.
- (15) Cats' Tales—pictures of cats with labels.
- (16) Things I Like to Do.
- (17) Things I Can Do.
- (18) My Name, the Names of My Family and Friends.
- (19) A Book of Birthdays—a popular booklet that gives practice in writing dates.
- (20) My School, and so on.

These booklets are suitable for the younger children. Older pupils will want to collect harder groups of words, for example, words to do with aero-

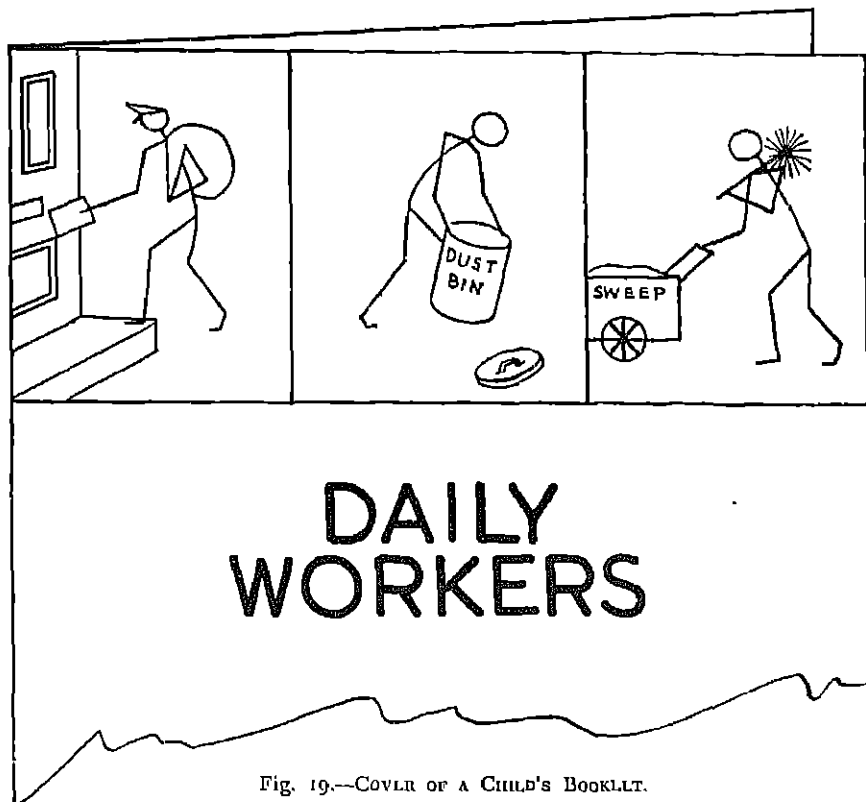


Fig. 19.—COVER OF A CHILD'S BOOKLET.

planes. A very useful booklet, apart from spelling and writing, is a booklet about "Signs Seen in the Streets," *Belisha beacons, traffic signals, Pedestrians cross here, etc.* This booklet encourages children to keep their eyes open. They like to see who can collect the greatest number of signs and notices seen in the streets. Drawings can be made of some of the signs. Some children will probably add notices seen on gates, as "No Hawkers or Circulars," etc.

Other suggestions are: (1) Names of

Things Made of Glass. (2) The Fire Engine. (3) A Railway Engine—of some important line. The children see how many parts of the engine they can name. (4) A River—this booklet links up with geography. Children themselves will have many suggestions as to the word booklets they would like to make. Much depends on their interests at the time. Suggestions for varied word books will be found in *English of Your Daily Life*, Books I to IV (Longmans).

## CHAPTER FIVE

# WRITTEN COMPOSITION

**O**RAL and written language are only two different ways of expressing thought, but they are not equally simple.

From his earliest days the child has expressed his thoughts in actions and speech—these are his natural modes of expression. Writing, on the other hand, is a highly artificial activity. The two arts, handwriting and composition, should not be combined too soon. Writing should be practised in connection with reading and spelling and various activities (see Chapters I, II, and IV).

The following are some easy steps in teaching written composition:

(1) Write some simple sentences on the board for the children to study and copy. Draw attention to the capital letter for the first word at the beginning of the sentence, and the full stop at the end:

Snow is soft and white.

The March wind is blowing.

My kitten is called Tiny.

A spider can spin a web.

Teach the children how to copy. The points for study are spelling, capitals, and punctuation. Tell them to read the sentence, to be sure of its meaning. How does each sentence end? Does it tell something or ask something? They all tell something, and therefore end with full stops. A sentence that asks a question ends with a question mark, as: "Who has seen the wind?"

When the children have studied the sentences, they should write them without looking at the blackboard. It is most important to stop the word-by-word or even letter-by-letter copying that tends to prevail. Such copying is of little value.

Children enjoy drawing little pictures and writing sentences for them, as: "The boy is flying his kite."

Simple sentences may be taken from their reading books and put on the board. It is wise to develop the idea of a simple sentence through the reading familiar to the child. Sentences are also written on the board that have been obtained orally from the class. These can be copied by the children in little booklets called "My Story Book." (For these sentences see Chapter III.)

Children enjoy choosing for themselves simple sentences from their reading books to copy. In the case of very backward pupils, the teacher should let them read first the sentence they are going to write. Quick children like to illustrate their sentences when possible.

There are useful sentences to copy and exercises on sentences in *English of Your Daily Life*, Book I (Longmans).

(2) *Completing Sentences*.—Sentences, with one word missing, are copied on the board. The children copy the sentence and supply the missing word. The words omitted should be varied, and include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. The position of the

missing word, too, should vary. This helps the child to understand the structure of the simple sentence, thus:

My doll has a blue —.  
 The blackbird has a — bill.  
 — are very fond of milk.  
 He was playing — the grass.  
 There — no buns left.  
 Dick ran — the room.  
 Cows eat —.

In the case of backward children, sentences with nouns omitted can be practised; then sentences with verbs omitted, and lastly adjectives.

(3) *Completing an Outline.*—This is a useful type of exercise which can be graduated from the very simplest exercise, almost a copying one, to exercises that need more thought and vocabulary. The sentences are planned for the pupils; they have to complete them:

#### ABOUT MYSELF

My name is —. I am — old. I live —. I have — brothers. I have — sisters. I go to — School. My teacher is —. I learn —.

These exercises involve reading, as well as writing and composition.

(4) *Pictures.*—Pictures are of great value in teaching written composition, especially to backward children. They provide ideas, aid vocabulary development, and stimulate the imagination. The first pictures must be simple, with one character only; for example, a cat playing with a ball. By the side of the picture some of the words needed for a sentence are written, as *ball, playing, with, cat*, to make the sentence, *The cat is playing with the ball.*

Fig. 20 shows a more difficult picture (an advertisement for Fry's cocoa). A list of words that the child may need is printed on the back: *father, girl,*

*little, supper, Teddy bear, happy, drinking, good night.*

The children write any sentences they like about the picture. Here are some written by children:

A little girl and her daddy are having tea! (The child evidently did not notice the bed.)

A little girl and her father are having supper.

The little girl has something nice to drink.

Intelligent children will want to write more sentences about this picture. Backward children may be confused because of the two characters. It is wise to ask them first to write sentences about the little girl, and then about her father, thus:

The little girl looks happy.

She is drinking something nice.

She has a Teddy bear.

Sometimes the pupil can be given a picture with two or three questions on it. Any word difficulties are written on the board or at the back of the picture, as:

Where is the little girl?

What is she doing?

What is her father doing?

With quick children or good spellers, only questions are asked. The pupils have to provide their own words for their simple sentences.

Finally, pictures only are provided and the children write what sentences they like. They may write descriptions of the pictures or stories about the pictures, as explained in Chapter III, Oral Composition. Both these exercises are of great value. Sometimes the description or story is prepared orally in class.

Give them practice now in finding good titles for pictures and for their stories about pictures. They have some



[Courtesy of Messrs. J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd.]

Fig. 20—PICTURE FOR WRITTEN COMPOSITION.

practice in writing titles when they make picture books about subjects that interest them, or class picture books.

(5) *Question Cards.*

(a) Sets of cards are prepared with questions about the meaning of what the children have been reading. Special stories or paragraphs should be selected for this purpose. These cards are useful in the case of history and geography.

(b) Sets of cards are also prepared with questions about the pupil, his home, his school, his park, etc. (local geography), and subjects that interest him; for example:

*Home.*—Where do you live? What can you see from your bedroom window? etc.

*Street.*—Are the houses in your street built of bricks? How many lights are there in your street? Is any house in your street painted green? Who brings your letters? Is there a pillar-box in your street?

*School.*—Where is your school? What class are you in? etc.

*Town and Shops.*—Where does your mother buy meat? What can you buy at a florist's? Which shop do you like best? Where is your library? How do you get to the shops from your home? etc. The questions will depend on the children's age.

*Park.*—What trees do you know in your park? Are there any flowers there? What do you like doing best



there? Have you seen any birds there? With whom do you like to go to the park?

*Amusements.*—Where can you see a clown? What is your favourite animal in the Zoo? Do you ever go to the pictures?

(6) *Simple Paragraphs or Short Stories with Easy Questions.*

(a) Scamp was the smallest puppy I ever saw. Daddy brought him home in his coat pocket. Nothing showed but Scamp's funny little nose. Now he is a big watchdog. He keeps off tramps and takes care of us at night.

What is the first thing the story tells about Scamp? How was he carried home? How much of Scamp showed? What did Scamp become? Why was he useful? How many sentences are there in this story?

(b) A little kid stood on the roof of a house. He looked down and saw a wolf passing by. "Wolf, I am not afraid of you," he cried. The wolf smiled. "You are brave because you are on the roof, and I cannot climb up to you?"

Where was the little kid? What is a little kid? What did he see? Why was he not afraid of the wolf? What would he have done if he had met the wolf in a field? What did the wolf say? How many sentences are in the story?

These little stories are good models for children, and help them to write in sentences. They also introduce the paragraph.

(7) *Writing Original Stories or Simple Paragraphs about Subjects of Interest.*—These can sometimes be built up in the oral lessons (see Chapter III, Oral Work). But some must be the children's unaided work, and can be suggested in this way: (a) Write four sentences about your cat or dog. (b)

Write four or five sentences about your favourite toy. (c) Write four sentences about an elephant. (d) Write some sentences about a little boy called Tom. Draw a picture of him.

(8) Most of the suggestions for oral composition lessons given in Chapter III can be used for written work: describing actions done in front of the class, riddles, questions, etc.

(9) Give the children the beginning sentences of a story. Let them copy these sentences and finish the story in three or four sentences.

(a) It was a dark, stormy night. Suddenly we heard a loud thump at the door.

(b) A farmer found a boy in one of his apple trees. "Come down," he called.

(c) I often do errands for Mother. One day she sent me to the fish shop.

(d) Jack was expecting his friend to tea. As soon as he heard a knock at the door, he ran down to open it.

(e) While Dick was staying in the country he had an adventure.

This exercise is good, because children get accustomed to new ways of beginning sentences; for example: Suddenly—. While Dick—. As soon as—.

(10) *Letter Writing.*—This is often a valuable exercise for backward children. Letters or notes, as far as possible, should be written with a purpose. Letter writing is treated in detail in Chapter IX, Titles, Letter Writing, and Projects.

(11) *Writing in connection with Projects and Activities of Various Kinds.*—All children write better when they have a purpose. Written composition will play a part in all their lessons, history, geography, scripture, etc. Projects

involving written work will be found in Chapters VIII and IX. Other interesting projects will be found in *Projects for the Junior School*, Books I to IV (Harpur), and in *English of Your Daily Life*, Books I to IV (Longmans); for example: Good Things to Eat, Ways of Crossing a River, Building a House, Clocks, Washing, Signs Seen in the Street, The Grocer's Shop, How We Travel, Our Town, The Post Office, The Story of Writing, Dinner-time Round the World, etc.

(12) *Making a Booklet about Tools* (Fig. 21).—This is a simple little project. The children think first of all the tools they use in school, such as the ruler, pen, pencil, needle, thimble, scissors, etc. They draw a picture of each tool, and say how it is used. They like to see how many tools they use at school. If they have room in their books, they draw and write about the tools used by their father and mother; see *English of Your Daily Life*, Book II (Longmans).

### The Paragraph

Reading lessons and wisely chosen copying exercises can be used to develop the paragraph sense. In the lowest class the children may have been allowed to

write related sentences one below the other. When children are eight or nine, or before if possible, this habit should be given up. Some idea of the paragraph has already been given the children in connection with oral composition. The short story with a limited subject forms a perfect paragraph. (See Chapter III, Oral Work.) Again, in oral work, when retelling stories by episodes or paragraphs, as suggested in Chapter III, the children get some idea of the paragraph.

Write on the blackboard for the children one of their short stories in paragraph form, thus:

"Bobby, our little brother, ran away. We looked for him for a long time. At last we found him in the garden of an empty house."

Then write by way of contrast several sentences about Bobby, expressing thoughts that have little or no connection:

Bobby, our little brother, ran away.

Bobby likes to play with our cat.

Last summer we went to the seaside.

I like ice-cream, and so does Bobby.

Ask the children which set of sentences tell a story. Let them notice how these are written, one after the other, and that the first line is "indented" (it goes in—like a dent in a ball). These are the signs of a written paragraph. The first word of the paragraph is not close to the margin. Impress upon them that the paragraph form is used only when the sentences are related; that is, when they help each other to tell a story or explain or describe something. They can think of the sentences in a paragraph as forming a family, because they are related.

Let the children find paragraphs in their readers, and see how indentation

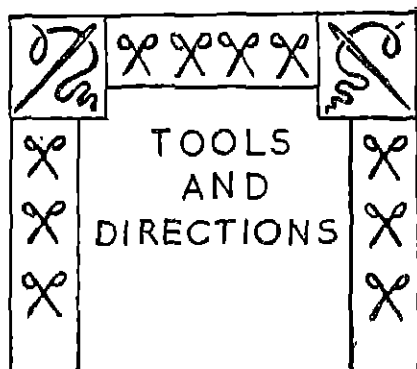


Fig. 21.—BOOKLET ABOUT TOOLS.

makes it plain where new paragraphs begin.

Give them plenty of practice during the reading lessons in telling what each paragraph is about, or finding titles or topic sentences for each paragraph. (See Chapters II and II.)

## Written Exercises

(1) A short paragraph is written on the board. The children copy it. They notice the indentation at the beginning; and study it carefully before they begin to write. Children like to copy these short stories from the board, to make a book of short stories to take home to their mothers. This means careful reading, studying, and copying. The stories must be short. Here is an example that may be useful:

### THE FOX AND THE LION

"A fox who had never seen a lion met one for the first time. He was so frightened that he almost died of fright. When he met the lion a second time, he was still frightened, but not so much. When he saw the lion the third time, the fox was so bold that he went up to him and asked him how he was."  
—Æsop.

Before they begin to copy the above story, ask them what all the sentences in the story tell about. Sentences written in this way, all related or telling about one subject—the Fox and the Lion—are called a paragraph. It is generally easy to find a title for a short paragraph.

(2) The children themselves choose a paragraph in their readers. They notice the *margin* of the page, where the first line begins and where the last line ends. They study it carefully. It is probably wise for the teacher to see the

paragraph chosen, especially in the case of backward children. If needs be, they can read their paragraph in a reading period, to make sure they understand what it is about. They then write a title or a sentence telling what the paragraph is about.

(3) Give the children a list of related and unrelated sentences. Let them pick out and copy any related sentences.

There was a house in the distance.

Of what is the squirrel thinking?

It was a cold, bright October morning.

There were many buns in the shop window.

The children in warm coats were gathering chestnuts.

The above is a difficult set of sentences for dull children. They may not be able to find the two related sentences: "It was a cold, bright October morning. The children, in warm coats, were gathering chestnuts."

It is easier if all the sentences are related except one, thus:

Peter went to the seaside.

The boy hurried to school.

There he saw children on the sands.

He ran to join them with his bucket and spade.

The children pick out the *unrelated sentence*, and write the rest of the sentences in paragraph form.

(4) The study of the paragraph, or the recognition of the paragraph, will go on in all the lessons in the upper classes, especially English, history, and geography. The children soon notice that their history book is arranged in paragraphs. If they form the habit of trying to get the main idea or ideas from each paragraph, and try to remember the order of the ideas or topics, they will find it the greatest help to

learning. Paragraph study is a way of thinking over what is read. Some children tend always to read in sentences, and are never able to link the sentences together and get the main idea. One of the best intelligence tests is to ask children to give the main thought or topic of the paragraph. Many children give the first sentence as the topic of the paragraph. This, of course, may or may not be right. Just as children get away from words and learn to grasp sentences, so they must get away from sentences and learn to grasp paragraphs.

(5) In the upper classes the children may be given the titles of two or three paragraphs of a story, and asked to write it, thus:

- (1) Tony's rabbit.
- (2) The escape of the rabbit.
- (3) How Tony found it.

With younger children the one-paragraph story should be continued for some time. Children readily see that if they are to write, for example, about their holidays, one event is all that they can manage properly.

### Sentence Structure

From the simple sentence children go on to the compound and complex sentences. It is not, however, until children have reached the mental age of nine that they introduce much variety into their sentences. Children of eight and nine begin to use compound sentences in their written work. Indeed, it is often necessary to check the use of *and*, while encouraging the use of *but*.

#### THE USE OF "AND," "BUT," COMPOUND SENTENCES

Let a child come out and perform two actions; for example, cleaning the

blackboard and writing on it. The children write down what he did:

He cleaned the blackboard and wrote on it.

Intelligent children will see that they have written two simple sentences joined by *and*, viz., *He cleaned the blackboard. He wrote on it.* They like to know the name of this sentence: a compound sentence, because compounded or made up of two or more sentences. Let the children compare compound nouns, such as blackboard, twenty-three, one-half.

Let the children think of a number of compound sentences to write:

Tom cleaned his shoes and brushed his coat.

Tom cleaned his shoes, brushed his coat, and dressed himself carefully. (In this sentence comes the use of the comma; see Chapter VIII.)

Encourage the children to use *but* in answering such questions as:

What is the difference between a cat and a dog?

A cat has sharp claws, *but* a dog has not.

A cat has soft fur, *but* a dog has hair, etc.

In Chapter VI there are suggestions for exercises on words opposite in meaning. Children use these words in simple sentences. Then they combine them to form compound sentences, thus:

Butter is soft. Stone is hard.

Butter is soft, *but* stone is hard.

It is dull today. It was bright yesterday.

It is dull today, *but* it was bright yesterday.

Jack is idle. Mary is busy, etc.

Children are given words opposite in meaning (see Chapter VI), and asked to use them in compound sentences.

## Complex Sentences

These are rarely used as freely as compound sentences, and children must be given a good deal of help with various complex sentences if they are to make progress. The easiest complex sentences are those containing an *if* clause. Indeed, children of eight and nine often use the conjunction *if* of their own accord.

Let a child tell what she would like to do *if she had five shillings to spend* or *if she were a fairy*. Some of the children's sentences are written on the board:

If I had five shillings to spend, I would buy a little dog.

If I were a fairy, I would dance in the moonlight.

The children notice that these are not simple sentences. Each is really two sentences joined by *if*, but one sentence depends on the other. *If I were* needs another sentence to complete it.

The children now write some interesting "If I were" sentences, or "If I had" sentences, or any sentences (intelligent children can learn the word *clauses*) joined by *if*; as:

I will come tomorrow if it is fine.

If you will come with me, I will go shopping.

Encourage the children to vary their sentences by beginning some with an "*if* clause" and ending some with an "*if* clause."

Give the children complex sentences to complete with "*if* clauses":

I shall go to the seaside tomorrow—.

He will fall down—.

I would buy a bicycle—.

You will not be late for school—.

The plants will wither—.

Exercises something like the above

can be made for clauses of time, and place, clauses of reason, relative clauses, etc. First they complete sentences like these:

When the party was over—.

From where I sit—.

Because he was so tired—.

Whenever I hear music—.

While he was waiting—.

and then:

He hurried home when—.

He was late for school because—.

This is the place where—.

Relative clauses are difficult for children to use correctly, and need constant practice. Write these joining words on the board: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, *that*, and give examples of their uses:

There was an old woman *who* lived in a shoe.

This is the boy *whom* we met yesterday.

He wondered to *whom* the book belonged.

He wondered *whose* book it was.

He did not know *which* of the two he liked best.

The ball *that* was lost was found.  
This is the child *that* I met.

Give the children sentences to join:

I saw the man. He stole the dog (*who*).

I like the little girl. She lives next door (*who*).

We live in a village. It is very pretty (*which* or *that*).

This is the girl. The teacher praises her (*whom*).

The ship was wrecked. It was laden with food (*that*).

The ship *that was wrecked* was laden with food.

This is the doll. I want it (*that*).

*What* causes a good deal of trouble.

This is *what* I want. The boy found *what* he wanted.

It is best not to ask children to join sentences with *what*, but give them only sentences in which *what* is used correctly. Children often use *what* instead of *that*, thus:

The vase *what* was broken.

Give them plenty of practice in these sentences: The vase *that* was broken was thrown away. The purse *that* I found was empty. Will you have the one *that* I brought?

The use of *that* must be practised again and again, so that the sound of "the vase *what*," "the one *what*," "the purse *what*" sound wrong, and they naturally say, "the vase *that*," "the one *that*," etc.

Model sentences, showing the different uses of conjunctions as well as relative pronouns, are useful for backward children. They can be thought out in the oral lessons, and are especially helpful to illiterate children if they deal with familiar activities and the daily life of the child. There is no need, of course, to worry the children with the word *relative* pronouns—the words can all be called *joining words*. But to draw the children's attention to the structure of these sentences is essential.

In the *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers* (1946) it says, in connection with training in written expression in the Primary School (Junior School): "Most of the capacity to write English in an ordered form and according to the accepted convention is derived from familiarity with books and from the practice of moderately formal and continuous speech. But some direct teaching will save time and repeated explanations. There will be abundant practice, for example, in the use of the full stop

and the capital letter, and later on in the use of the *relative pronoun* and of the *inverted relative*, of quotation marks and question marks." (One wonders why the use of the difficult relative pronoun is put among the comparatively very easy full stop and question mark!)

The children must be encouraged to look in their reading books for sentences containing clauses beginning with *when*, *while*, *whenever*, *where*, *who*, *which*, *that*, *because*, etc. In some cases the children copy their "finds."

In the oral composition lessons they can be encouraged to use the sentences they have studied, but on the whole they will not get much help from speech, especially the children from poor neighbourhoods. Direct teaching and abundant practice in written work are needed.

Teachers may find some help with regard to complex sentences in *The Land of Words*, Books I to IV (Bell). The children will enjoy the amusing story of "Mr. Pronoun," who shows Tom and Betty how to join sentences with *who*, *that*, and *which*.

Most children enjoy making "Self-help Sentence Books" (see Chapter VI), in which they put each kind of sentence that they learn about; two simple sentences—a statement and a question; two compound sentences—*and* and *but*; and then all the many complex sentences. They can use these books for reference. On the cover they put a design of capital letters because all sentences begin with capital letters.

They arrange their complex sentences under the joining words used. Simple exercises on sentence joining can be based on these:

## WRITTEN COMPOSITION

(1) *As, if.*

You are not as tall *as* I am.

If you come to my house, I will show you my kitten.

(2) *When, where, while.*

I will come *when* I am ready.

I know a bank *where* violets grow.

Make hay *while* the sun shines.

(3) *After, before, then, until = till.*

*After* we had started, the weather cleared.

*Before* I go out, I will write a letter.

When the clown entered, *then* the fun began.

We waited at the entrance *until* you came.

Ring *till* you get an answer.

(4) *Because, than, although, whenever.*

We liked the clowns *because* they were so funny.

I am much taller *than* you are.

He would skate, *although* he was told the ice was not safe.

*Whenever* I hear a merry tune I want to dance.

(5) *Who, whose, whom, which, that.*

I do not know *whose* dog this is.

I wonder *who* will win the prize?

The child to *whom* the prize is given will be happy.

Here is the book *that* you lent me.

These are the apples *which* grew in my garden.

(6) *Since, unless, for.*

*Since* it seemed likely to rain, we hurried home.

I shall not go *unless* I hear from you.

He could not have seen me, *for* I was not there.

(7) *However, nevertheless, therefore, whether.*

*However* much I try, I cannot do this sum.

Perhaps you have seen it in many books, *nevertheless* I think it is wrong.

My teacher told me how to spell this word, *therefore* I know it is right.

*Whether* it rains or not, I shall go.

The last two groups of words (6) and (7) are, on the whole, least used by children.

Many children will enjoy putting in their "Self-help Sentence Books" examples of sentences to show the use of each of the joining words used above. Some will collect or construct only a few sentences for the easier words, such as *because* or *after*. But they will all be encouraged to think a little more about sentence structure, and notice the sentences used in their reading books. This applies particularly to the upper classes, who are reading more widely and therefore meeting more idiomatic English.

Children should also be encouraged to make sentences containing *either . . . or, neither . . . nor, no . . . or*.

*Either* jam *or* marmalade *is* nice for tea.

*Neither* Tom *nor* Betty *was* at school.

No boy *or* girl *is* absent today.

*Either* you are wrong *or* I am wrong.

You can *either* bicycle to school *or* go by train.

Children need to be encouraged to vary the form of their sentences and to use new expressions. One way to do this is to set questions on short stories or paragraphs, and to underline some of the words the child is to use in her answer, for example:

"Many a night the little mermaid stood by the open window of the palace. Looking up through the dark blue water she could see the moon and stars. Their light was pale, but they looked much bigger through the water than they do to our eyes. From time to time a dark shadow glided between her and

them. Either a whale or else a ship, she knew, must be passing above her. If it were a ship, she wondered who was on board and what they were thinking about. She longed to know more of the bright world above the sea."

(1) What did the little mermaid do many a night?

(2) What could she see?

(3) How did the moon and stars look to her?

(4) What glided from time to time between her and the moon and stars?

(5) What did she know was passing above her?

(6) If it were a ship, what did she wonder?

(7) Of what did she long to know more?

Letting the children reproduce short stories, descriptions, or interesting paragraphs is also a good way to encourage them to use complex sentences, and good opening sentences, *if* the children study the paragraph sufficiently to assimilate some sentences or phrases in their original form. Whether the children do assimilate any sentences or phrases depends a good deal upon their interest in the paragraph. If it makes an impression on them, they often remember a striking phrase or expression.

Sometimes it happens that no child does, and the story is reproduced in their own limited vocabulary. In this

case, it is often wise to read the story again and call their attention to the apt word or good phrase. Then let them rewrite it.

Although children in the Primary School learn little grammar, it makes their English work more interesting and *progress more possible if they learn* that there are different kinds of sentences, and collect them as described. Often the children seem to make little progress in English because the work is so vague.

Again, it helps vocabulary work and the teaching of English if children know that there are different kinds of words, doing different work—nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives; adverbs (words or phrases telling *how, when, or where*), and joining words. In the next chapter, the parts of speech are dealt with under vocabulary work.

Various projects are also suggested that will aid written work. Further suggestions for written work will also be found in Chapter VIII, which deals with punctuation, the use of capital letters, etc.

A useful series of English books that encourage children to talk and write, and suggest worth-while reading is the "Living English" Series for Junior Schools by J. W. Marriott. These are four books dealing with subjects of interest to children: *Round the House, Rat-Tat-Tat, Further Afield, and Out of Doors* (Newnes Educational Publishing Company, Ltd.).



# VOCABULARY WORK AND SIMPLE GRAMMAR

## Vocabulary

ONE cannot stress too often the value of building up a child's spoken vocabulary. Backward readers will remain backward readers unless they acquire a meaningful spoken vocabulary.

The children's vocabulary is increased by: (1) their activities, both in and out of school, (2) the different subjects they learn—history, geography, nature study, etc. Each subject gives them new words. Every new thing they learn to do in the handwork lesson, especially in connection with weaving and other crafts, helps them to acquire a more varied vocabulary. This is why, often, backward readers make no more progress, or even less progress, if they drop a subject to give more time to reading. History and geography, if rightly taught, are a great help to reading. Geography often appeals to backward readers. They want to read the names on sketch-maps. They want to make and read sentences about Red Indians. Stories of life in the jungle appeal to them more than easy Readers do.

Chapters I and II naturally contain suggestions for vocabulary work, since learning to read is learning new words, but a number of words come and go. New words met in reading are often forgotten in a few days. Whether a child will remember a word or not

depends on the number of times he sees or hears it—*repetition*, or on the *depth of the impression* the word made on him. Opportunities must therefore be given for repetition, and means sometimes found for making words "impressive." New words heard in the handwork lesson, words that tell a child how to make things, are often remembered. Hence the value of using the handwork lessons to teach some reading, or reading about how to make things in the reading periods. If directions are sometimes written on the board (the blackboard should never be despised) in which new words are introduced, these will often pass easily into the child's spoken and written vocabulary.

Again, acting scenes from history or literature (see Drama Section) helps to impress words on children. The words come to life, as it were.

The spoken vocabulary, built up with the reading vocabulary, prevents the child from approaching words as artificial and arbitrary symbols, hence the value of oral work and the use of pictures and drawings, etc.

## Pictures

Pictures are useful because they make an impression on the child. Children remember well what they see in pictures; for example, a child who sees a coloured picture of a fine tawny lion

(Plate I, NATURE STUDY SECTION) tends to remember the word *tawny*. The names of a great many colours are often best taught by pictures—*russet*, *dove-colour*, *golden brown*, etc. Pictures of autumn scenes will help children to find more colours in the leaves they see in the parks, and find names for them—*pale yellow*, *dark brown*, *tawny*, etc. Some pictures should be chosen for their colours.

Pictures are especially useful for vocabulary work for little ones, pictures of farms (Plate XX, NATURE STUDY SECTION), seaside scenes, river scenery, etc. From a river scene the following words may be learnt: The cattle are standing in a *shallow* part of the river, a *ford*. Butterflies are *hovering* over the flowers. The river *curves* and winds. A bridge *spans* the river. Overhanging trees cast shadows. *Ripples* on the water, etc.

#### MAKING PICTURE BOOKS

The teacher prints words or phrases on the board she wants the children to remember. The children find pictures that illustrate the words, and paste them in a book. Under each picture they write the name. The best plan is to let the children mount their pictures on separate pieces of paper and then tie them together to form booklets. Sometimes the words chosen are to do with some central topic suitable to the age of the children; for example: The Garden (lawn mower, garden roller, hose, etc.), the Kitchen, Furniture, A Grocer's Shop (or other shop), Toys, etc.

Good pictures can be found in the newspaper, and in catalogues and advertisements. As these are well drawn, they are often worth studying from the point of view of art, and the child is the gainer by looking at them and cutting them out. The words are left on the

board until the booklets are complete. The child often has to consult and read them, saying, "I still have to find a picture of a *machine*," etc.

Older children may find pictures for more difficult words (not necessarily names of things); for example: A Conversation (Fig. 22, Barratt's advertisement), A New Costume, Toilet Soap, Jewellery, etc.

Sometimes the children may be allowed to collect their own pictures, mount them, and add the name or title to each. These booklets, when well made, give pleasure both to the children and to their parents. Through looking at them, they add to their vocabulary and learn to spell. There are many ways of varying these booklets and their use. Sometimes sentences or little stories can be written under the picture. In the case of Fig. 22, a conversation can be written. But the underlying idea is the making of a word or phrase booklet to give the child as real an understanding of words as possible.

#### Descriptive Words

Children have few words with which to describe things. The word *nice*, for example, is used far too often. The following methods help children to think of new words, and interest them in finding suitable descriptive words or adjectives:

(1) Let the children for a week notice the different kinds of fruits and vegetables in the shops. (If it is winter, it must be toys, or fish, etc.) They think of good words to describe them. When they think of a word, they bring it to school and it is written on the board. The child must also name the fruit or vegetable that made her think of the descriptive word, as *green* cabbage, *red*

tomatoes, *yellow* bananas. After a bit it becomes harder for children to find an adjective *not* on the board; they have to think, and thus more interesting words are found: *rosy* apples, *bright yellow* oranges, *yellow and brown* bananas, *crisp* lettuce, *fresh* parsley, and others, such as *pink*, *delicious*, *juicy*, *luscious* (from an older group), etc.

When sufficient descriptive words have been collected, each one is written on a card or slip of paper, and the cards or slips placed in a box. The teacher says they are going to pack a basket of fruit and vegetables to send to a hospital in such and such a town. Each child must put something in the basket. A child comes out and draws a slip of paper from the box. She reads the descriptive word, say *ripe*, and says, "I am going to put in a ripe pear," and so on. If a child chooses a word that he cannot read, say, *luscious*, he says he is going to his garden to find something and carries the word to his desk to learn it. Then he returns with, perhaps, a bunch of *luscious* grapes.

(2) The children see how many adjectives they can find to describe something; for example, a *cake*, a *book*, a *kitten*, etc. Children are surprised to find how many adjectives there are for describing a *book*. After denouncing the inevitable "nice," the teacher can lead them into thinking of the following:

thrilling	interesting
exciting	absorbing



[Courtesy of Messrs W. Barratt & Co Ltd]

Fig 22—PICTURE FOR THE WORD "CONVERSATION."

useful  
out of the common

funny  
amusing  
comic

In another list they can give the negative side: silly, foolish, dry, dull, uninteresting, ordinary, too long, tedious.

It is especially useful to let children think of words to describe *writing* (mechanical writing). It will draw their attention to their own writing, and perhaps make them critical: large, small, neat, untidy, upright, sloping, careful, clear, good, bad.

Let them write down adjectives expressing praise of each of the following things—one adjective for each word: (1) cake, (2) girl, (3) book, (4) river, (5) dog, (6) picture, (7) scent. Each noun in this list needs a different adjective. Let the children find out why it would be foolish to try to apply the same adjective to them all.

Then let the children write down words expressing blame of certain things, as: (1) eggs, (2) road, (3) roses, (4) hats, (5) cake, (6) soap, (7) table, (8)

water, (9) sitting-room. They must find as many adjectives as they can for each noun. This needs thought. We can blame an egg by calling it *bad*, but we do not usually say a *bad cake*, or a *bad table*. A cake may be *stale* or *mouldy*, and a table *rickety*, *ugly*, *unsteady*, *dirty*, *plain*. The children may have difficulty in finding words to blame roses. They may not think of *withered*, *faded*, *drooping*. It requires thought to find the right descriptive adjectives.

It makes a useful exercise to let children write a list of ten nouns. They can do this the day before, and bring the list to class the next day, because each child must *have in mind* a good adjective that expresses praise (or blame) of each thing he has named. In class the lists are exchanged. (Each list must state the adjectives required—those that blame or those that praise.) The children read their lists carefully and write down the best adjectives they can think of. The lists are then returned, each to the one who first wrote it. The owners see if the adjectives written on their paper are correct, or better than the ones they had in mind. The best lists are pinned on the board. Children also like to discuss their lists.

### Making Booklets for the Parts of Speech

It is a great help to vocabulary work and to English generally if the children know the names of the parts of speech. They need no definitions or generalizations given them. They must do the discovering, and much later on arrive at definitions.

First let them make a booklet for nouns that they find, a *Noun Booklet*. It is difficult to think of something dis-

tinctive to go on the cover. If the children have read about the gay doings of Mr. Noun, Mr. Adjective, Dr. Verb, etc., in *The Land of Words*, Books I to IV (Bell), they can put a picture of Mr. Noun on the cover (Fig. 23). Mr. Noun, the children notice, is very wealthy, because he has so many names (the name of everything we can see, touch, hear, smell, or think about belongs to him). He always carries about with him a case packed full with some of his many words. The children realize they can put only a few of his words in their booklets.

First they divide their booklets into four parts. The greater number of pages are kept for Common Nouns; one-fourth will be enough for Proper Nouns. (Some children insist on having a separate book for Proper Names.) They collect their nouns under different headings: (1) School nouns—*book*, *blackboard*, *geography*, *music*, etc., (2) Garden Nouns, (3) Grocer's Shop, (4) Washing, (5) New Inventions, etc.

The children also collect Proper Nouns under headings, as Names of Girls, Names of Boys, Names of Towns, Names of Streets, Names of Counties, etc.

*Mr. Adjective's Booklet* (Fig. 24).—Mr. Adjective can also be copied from *The Land of Words* (Bell). He is dressed like a postman, and has a large sack of adjectives. He waits upon Mr. Noun, because all his words are used with nouns. The children can think of many ways of filling up Mr. Adjective's Book. Here are some suggestions:

(a) Draw or find some pictures of cakes or buns. Beside the pictures write a list of adjectives to be used in describ-

ing them: *new, stale, fresh, mouldy, rich, plain, well-baked, sugary, dainty, tempting, brown, etc.*

(b) On another page, a picture of a dog is pasted, or the names of some dogs printed, and descriptive words found for them: *faithful, frisky, big, rough-haired, surly, good-tempered, black and tan, etc.*

(c) The name *Boy Scout* is printed at the head of the next page (it may be difficult for the children to find pictures). There are many words to describe a boy scout: *trust-worthy, obedient, loyal, courteous, friendly, helpful, thrifty, reverent, clean, brave, eager, etc.*

(d) It is interesting if the children arrange some words in two columns; for example, they have one column for words that describe a good boy, and another for words that describe a bad boy, thus:

*A Good Boy*  
obedient  
good-tempered  
industrious

*A Bad Boy*  
disobedient  
bad-tempered  
idle, lazy

Children sometimes like to find adjectives to describe their ideal Queen of the May, a Pirate, a Cosy Kitchen,

an Untidy Sitting-room, etc. Each child tries to make the most interesting book she can. By finding pictures, or drawing pictures and writing names, the children realize that adjectives are used with nouns, that is, that Mr. Adjective waits upon Mr. Noun. The noun is the more important word.

*Mr. Pronoun's Booklet* (Fig. 25) may be a long, narrow book with very few pages, because Mr. Pronoun is long and thin

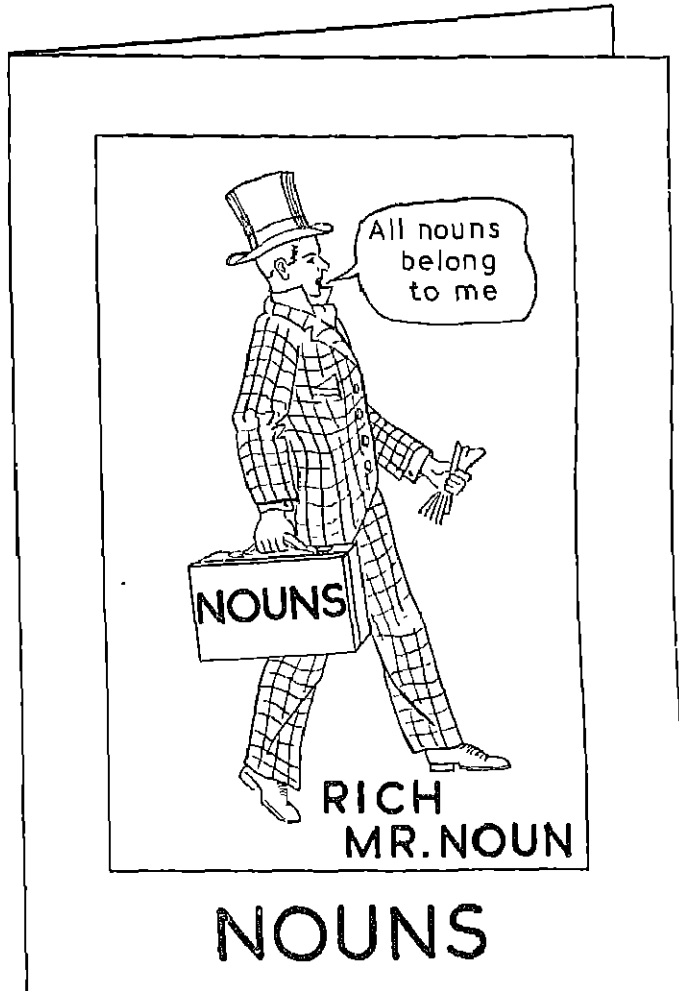


Fig. 23.—BOOKLET FOR NAMES OR NOUNS.

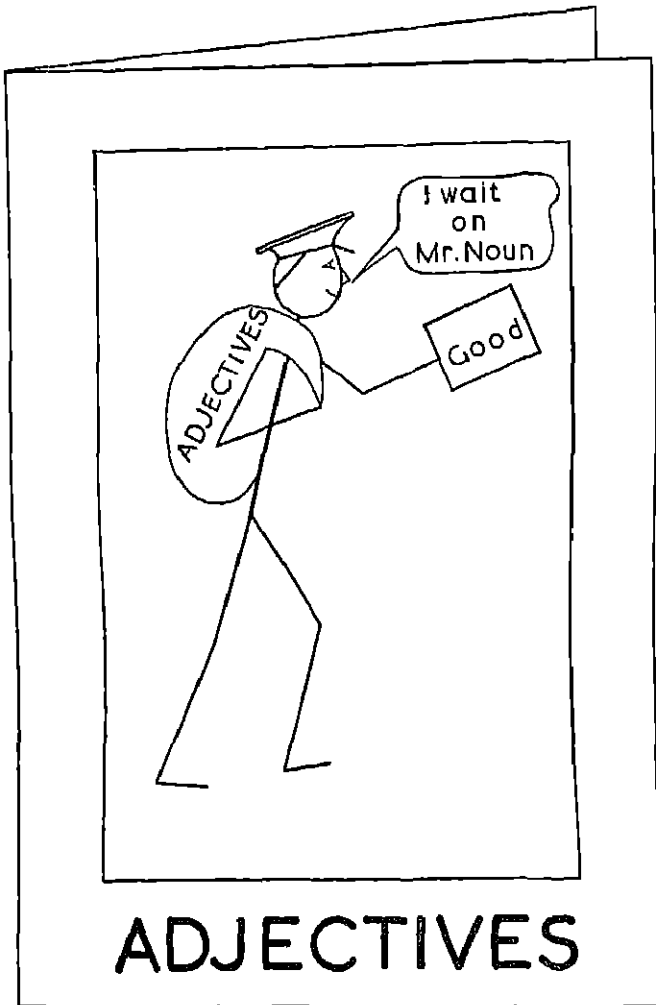


Fig 24.—BOOKLET FOR MR. ADJECTIVE

and has very few words. Mr. Pronoun's words, too, are not very interesting, because they stand for some of Mr. Noun's words. The children are interested to find that they can count Mr. Pronoun's words and write them *all* in his book, but no one can count or write all the words that belong to rich Mr. Noun. Every new invention gives him more words, such as *telephone*, *wireless*, *flying bombs*, etc.

**Pronouns.**—*I* (me), *we* (us); *you*; *he* (him), *she* (her); *it*, *they* (them); *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*; *one*, *any*, *anyone*, *anybody*, *anything*; *some*, *somebody*, *someone*, *something*; *none*, *nobody*, *nothing*; *other*, *another*; *all*, *few*, *many*, *several*, *each*, *either*, *neither*, *everyone*, *who*, *which*, *that*, *what*.

It is helpful and interesting if the children make a sentence for each pronoun: *I* am going out. Give *me* an apple. *We* are working hard. Please, give *us* some apples. *You* are a good girl, but *you* are naughty boys. *He* met *me*. She is a nice girl. I met *her* in the Park, etc. *This* is my house. *That* is not mine. *These* are nice apples. I envy *nobody*. *Nothing* worries *me*. *Someone* is talking. *Each* of the boys claims this pen. Is *either* of these

books yours? etc.

*A Booklet for Dr. Verb* will introduce them to many new action words. (They have already made a simple booklet of action words, see Chapter I and Chart II.) On the cover of their new booklets they draw little stick figures doing things, as in Fig 26. They had better call their booklet "*Dr. Verb's Words*" and not "*Doing Words*," because they will one day have

to learn that some verbs speak of *having* and *being* as well as *doing*.

There are such a great number of verbs that it is best for the children to choose some interesting headings, such as: Holiday Verbs; Schoolroom Verbs, as—*to read, to write*; Household Verbs—*to scrub, to wash, to dress*, etc.; Railway Station Verbs, and so on. They will also like to have a page or so for action words they meet in their reading.

In *The Land of Words* (Bell) they will find a picture of Dr. Verb. Here it explains that Dr. Verb thinks he is very important and learned, because every sentence must have a verb in it.

Children are interested to see how nouns and pronouns work with verbs to make sentences. Pronouns and verbs, they see, make very short sentences, as: *I walk, you run, he learns, she sews, we dance, you sing, they talk*. The children remember that all these pronouns stand for the names of people, or nouns.

*A Booklet of Adverbs* (Fig. 27).—A similar booklet can be made for Mr. Adverb's words. Just as Mr. Adjective waits upon Mr. Noun, so Mr. Adverb waits upon Dr. Verb. Adverbs are used with verbs to tell: *How* an action is done, as He writes *nicely*; *when* an action is done, as He went *yesterday*; *where* an action is done, as, The aeroplane landed *here*.

The children call their booklets "The How, When, and Where Booklet" or "Mr. Adverb's Booklet" (Fig. 27).

The children have separate pages for the "How" words and phrases, the "When" words and phrases, and the "Where" words and phrases. In the

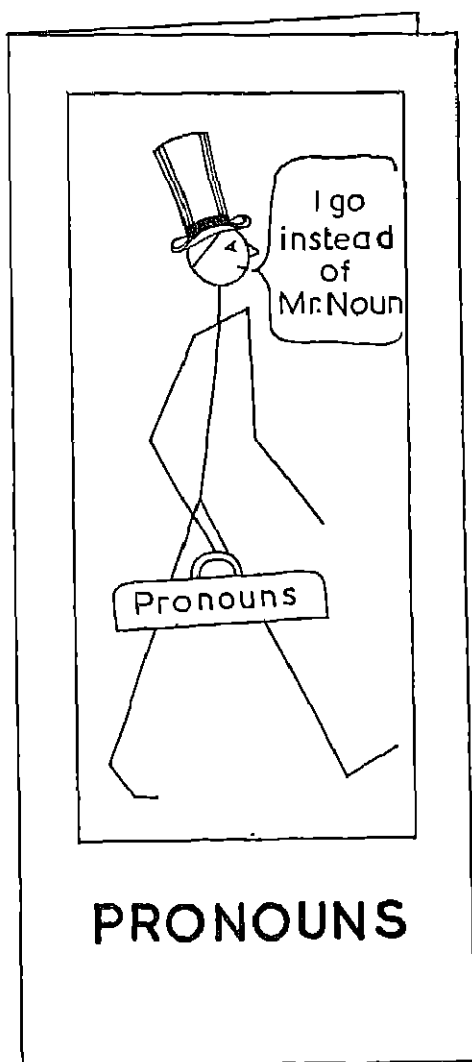


Fig. 25.—BOOKLET FOR MR. PRONOUN.

Word-making Section the making of adverbs from adjectives is dealt with. When the children can "make adverbs," they have many to add to their "How" pages; for example, *slow*, he walks *slowly*; a careful boy writes *carefully*, etc.

They like to look through their reading books to find words and phrases

that tell *when*, as, *in a moment, early, last night, at break of day, at eleven o'clock*, etc.

Children also learn much from collecting phrases that tell *where*. They can make drawings to illustrate some of their phrases, or place objects in the position indicated by the phrase, as, *in the middle, on the left, by the window, under the tree, in the corner, along the river, in all directions, on the surface, on deck, beside the fire, through the cornfield*, etc.

Through the phrases collected from their books, one often discovers some that a child has not properly grasped. They are to him merely words he can read.

The above suggestions, used side by side with the reading programme, will all help to develop word and phrase vocabulary.

Children like to call these booklets

"Self-help Booklets," because they are really helping themselves as they fill them carefully with material they have found for themselves. They also use these books for revision and oral work.

The joining words (conjunctions) they have already used in their sentence booklets.

### Other Suggestions for Vocabulary Work

*Substituting* one word for another is a valuable exercise, but this has already been dealt with in Chapter II, Reading.

### OPPOSITES

First let the children use the word opposite in phrases and sentences: (1) The tree *opposite* to the house. (2) *Opposite* sides of a square. Let the children make a drawing of a square and mark the *opposite* sides. (3) One child can stand *opposite* to another. (4) The two men came from *opposite* directions. Draw them.

We say stone is *hard*, and butter is *soft*. *Hard*, we know, is the opposite to *soft*.

Give the children two columns of words. Tell them that each word in the first column has an opposite in the second column. They must find the opposite; then use the two words in a sentence. When they have finished the first word, they go on to the second word in the *first* column, and find *its* opposite, and again use the two in a sentence. As far as possible the words should be chosen from the books that the children are using. Here are useful lists of opposites:

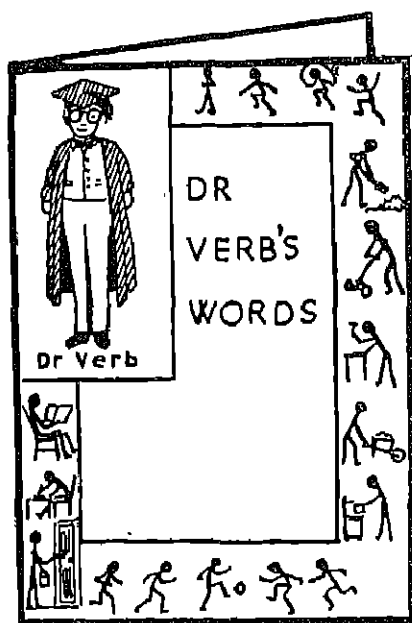


Fig. 26.—BOOKLET FOR VERBS.



## VOCABULARY WORK, SIMPLE GRAMMAR

quiet	merry	bottom
clever	stupid	dark
rough	dull	top
sad	idle	light
busy	beautiful	early
bright	easy	difficult
smooth	crooked	ugly
noisy	late	straight

The children should be encouraged to write interesting sentences; for example, She liked the *quiet* country fields after her stay in the *noisy* town.

*Another Exercise in Opposites.*—The teacher writes on the board a list of words. By the side of each word she writes three or four words, among which is the opposite to the first word, thus: *rude*—kind, polite, mean, good.

The children copy the words, and in each case underline the word which is the opposite to the first word. Here are some for upper classes:

*tall*—large, short, square, huge.  
*up*—under, over, down, on.  
*laugh*—sing, talk, giggle, cry.  
*dangerous*—wild, bad, safe.  
*friend*—person, companion, enemy.  
*fine*—little, coarse, small.  
*fat*—big, huge, thin.  
*foolish*—smart, silly, wise, funny.

### SORTING WORDS

The children are given three headings:

Garden    Motor-car    Butcher's Shop

When these have been written down, the teacher writes on the board a mixed

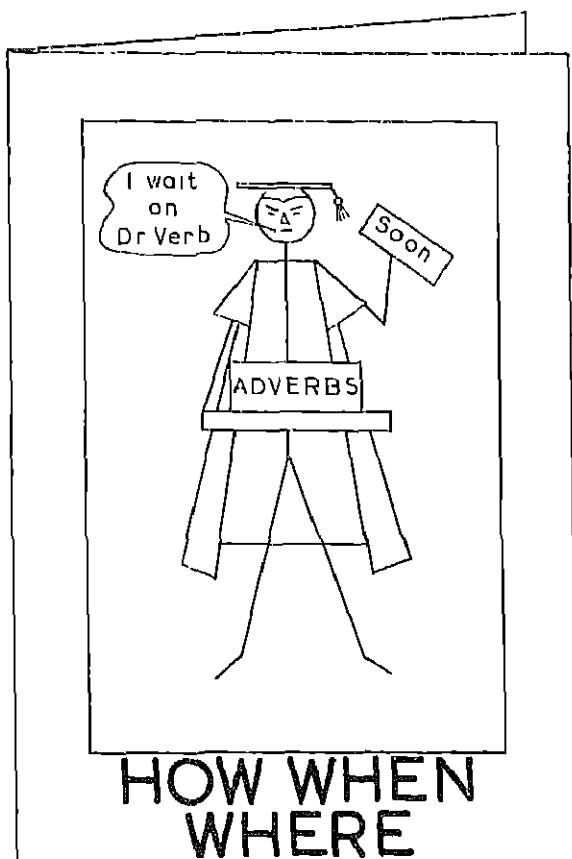


Fig. 27.—BOOKLET FOR ADVERBS.

list of words, each of which belongs to one of the above headings. The children arrange them under the right headings: veal, violet, radiator, sausage, rose, wheel, seat, tank, beef, carnation, brake, ham, daffodil, pork, tyre, window, bacon, lily.

Other interesting headings are:

(1) Baker's Shop. (2) Zoo. (3) School-room.

(1) Dresser or China Cupboard. (2) Wardrobe. (3) Writing Desk.

(1) Fruit Shop. (2) Farmyard. (3) Bedroom.

*Increasing Lists.*—This makes an amusing game, and tests children's vocabulary both oral and written. The teacher writes on the board two or three words of classified lists—lists of trees, articles of dress, parts of the body, birds, fruit, furniture, workers, drinks, sweets, jewellery, etc., thus:

- (1) Oak, beech, . . .
- (2) Dress, hat, tie, . . .
- (3) Hand, elbow, eyes, . . .
- (4) Robin, wren, . . .
- (5) Desk, seat, book, . . .
- (6) Chairs, piano, bed, . . .
- (7) Tiger, lion, . . .
- (8) Top, doll, . . .
- (9) Milk, water, . . .
- (10) Farmer, carpenter, . . .
- (11) Chocolate, toffee, . . .
- (12) Veal, mutton, ham, . . .
- (13) Beads, rings, . . .
- (14) Motor, wagon, . . .

The children copy the words and see who can increase the lists to the greatest extent.

#### SORTING WORDS ACCORDING TO THEIR USE

Let the children sort words into lists under two headings:

- What People Do  
(Doing Words or Verbs)
- What People Are Like  
(Descriptive Words)

Remind the children that "doing words" can easily be found by putting a pronoun in front of them and seeing if a sentence is made, as, *smile, I smile*; but *rice* is clearly not a verb; we cannot say "I rice." Let them apply this test to the following list:

*Words to be Sorted.*—Laugh, gay, frown, sad, grumble, rich, think, ill, angry, learn, greedy, hurry, quiet, eat, poor, blush, unhappy, read, clever, talk, wise, sit, silent.

A third heading can be added later, "Names of Things or Nouns." The more headings there are, the more varied are the words, and therefore the more difficult it is for children to sort them. Two headings only should be used for slower children and younger children, but the headings may be combined in different ways, thus:

- (1) Names of Things  
(or Nouns)
  - (2) What Things Are Like  
(Descriptive Words)
- or
- (1) What People Do  
(Verbs)
  - (2) How, When, and Where They Do Them  
(Adverbs)

*List to be Sorted.*—Run, in a hurry, dig, slowly, tomorrow, write, learn, by the fire, gather, down, across the road, carefully, travel, stand, well, never, lay, empty, here, quickly;  
or

- (1) Nouns or Names
- (2) Doing Words or Verbs

An interesting book to help children with simple grammar, punctuation and vocabulary work is *Crystal-Clear English*, by Joan and Winifred Dunn (Newnes Educational Publishing Co. Ltd.). It suggests many activities for children.

WORD BUILDING, SPELLING RULES,  
ALPHABET AND DICTIONARY WORK

WHEN the children have a fair writing vocabulary, their attention can be called, at appropriate times, to simple spelling rules, word making, formation of plural forms, proper names, the dictionary, so that they can become more independent readers and learners.

Children enjoy making their own booklets for *Spelling Rules*, or *Word Building*, or *Word-making Booklets*, as they like to call them. In the drawing and handwork lessons they can make suitable covers for their books, with appropriate patterns, so that they can distinguish them from other books. It is best for them to use separate sheets of paper for pages. These can be fastened later in their covers. Separate sheets will give the children plenty of room to add new words, as they find them, under each spelling rule. They can collect the words from a variety of sources—reading books, lessons, books at home. Looking for things and collecting always appeals to children of the Primary School age. Of course, they would rather collect tangible things, but they can come to enjoy word hunts.

The following rules should be taught to the children at different times:

- (1) *Making New Words by Adding -ing.*—

(a) When *-ing* is added to words ending in *e*, the *e* is generally dropped, as:

come, coming	name, naming
hate, hating	arrive, arriving
bathe, bathing	love, loving
care, caring	make, making

The children see how long a list they can make.

Later, through their word making they will be able to formulate the rule that final *e* is generally dropped when an ending beginning with a vowel is added. But generalizations like these are too difficult for little ones at first. However, they can remember that *e* is dropped when *-ing* is added.

When the children meet an exception they can be told why it is an exception. Words ending in *ie*, *ye*, *oe*, and *ee* would be very awkward-looking if they dropped the *e*. We write:

dyeing	hieing	shoeing	seeing
eyeing	vieing	hoeing	agreeing

(b) When *-ing* is added to words ending in a single *accented consonant*, this consonant is doubled, as: bet, betting; nod, nodding; run, running; bat, batting; spin, spinning; swim, swimming; get, getting; hop, hopping; occur, occurring; begin, beginning; forbid, forbidding.

The children make long lists. They

can keep the two-syllable words apart from the one-syllable words.

The rule that accent doubles the last consonant, if thoroughly understood, will keep the learner right in several thousand words. Take *tub* and *tube*. In *tub* the accent strikes the *b*; in *tube* it strikes the *u*. Therefore we write *tubbing* with two *b*'s, and *tubing* with one. So with *man* and *mean*, *bet* and *beat*. We write *manning* and *meaning*; *betting* and *beating*. The children can notice the accent for themselves. They will also notice that the accented vowel is a long vowel—*beat*, *leap*, but the accented consonant has a short vowel in front of it, *get*, *pin*, *pop*. Some children make a rule for themselves. They say, "If there are two vowels in front of the consonant, you do not double it." This shows observation.

Here are some words of two syllables where the accent does not fall on the last syllable or consonant, therefore they do not double the last letter: *differ*, *differing*; *offer*, *offering*; *suffer*, *suffering*.

It is as well to teach children as soon as possible where the accent falls on words. There is plenty of opportunity in the spelling lessons.

(c) Nearly *all* words ending in *l* double the final consonant, whether the accent strikes it or not: *travel*, *gambol*, *equal*, *shovel*, *cancel*, *model*, *pencil*, *rival*, etc.

Children like collecting words ending in *l*.

(2) *Making Words by Adding -ed or -d.*—

(a) The same rule applies as for adding *-ing*. Accent doubles the last consonant; *dot*, *dotted*; *permit*, *permitted*, etc.; but: *differed*, *suffered*, *offered*.

(b) Words ending in *y* with a consonant before it change the *y* into *i* when *-ed* is added: *try*, *tried*; *cry*, *cried*; *marry*, *married*; *reply*, *replied*, etc.

(3) *Making Words by Adding -y.*—Nouns can be changed into adjectives by adding *y*; for example: *dirt*, *dirty*; *sleep*, *sleepy*; *sand*, *sandy*; *storm*, *stormy*; *cloud*, *cloudy*.

(a) Words ending in *e* drop the *e* when *y* is added, as *rose*, *rosy*. This is a very useful rule. Let the children make adjectives from these nouns and use them in sentences: *shade*, *stone*, *wire*, *noise*, *smoke*, *grime*, *shine*, *bone*.

(b) When the word ends in a single accented consonant, this consonant is doubled; for example: *star*, *starry*, *fog*, *fun*, *mud*, *sun*, *slop*; but: *soap*, *soapy*.

(4) *Making Words by Adding -ly.*—Adverbs can be made from adjectives by adding *-ly*. These adverbs tell *how* things are done, as: *bad*, he wrote *badly*; *quick*, he ran *quickly*.

(a) If the adjectives end in *y*, change the *y* to *i* before adding *-ly*, thus: *tidy*, *tidily*; *happy*, *happily*; *gay*, *gaily*, etc.

(b) Adjectives ending in *le* drop the *e*, as: *noble*, *nobly*; *idle*, *idly*; *amiable*, *amiably*; *able*, *ably*, etc.

The children add the above adverbs to their "How, When, and Where" Booklets (Chapter VI), telling at the same time how they are made from adjectives. They look out for adverbs ending in *-ly* in their reading books.

(5) *Making Words by Adding -er.*—Here we use the same rule—"accent doubles the final consonant"; for example: *win*, *winner*; *sin*, *sinner*; *stop*, *stopper*; *chat*, *chatter*; *drum*, *drummer*, etc.; but *bake*, *baker*; *garden*, *gardener*, etc.

(6) *Adding -er and -est to Adjectives.*

(a) nice, nicer, nicest; long, longer, longest, etc.

(b) busy, busier, busiest; happy, happier, happiest, etc.

Children may now be able to make this rule: Words ending in *y* with a consonant before it change the *y* into *i* when *-ed*, *-ly*, *-er*, *-est* are added.

(7) *Making Words by Adding -ful (full).*—Spoonful, careful, mouthful, etc.; beauty, beautiful (see rule above).

The children will be able to find many more words ending in *-ful* to add to their list.

(8) *Making Words by Adding -ness.*—Quick children, who understand what nouns are, will see that they are making nouns from adjectives: ill, illness; careful, carefulness; still, stillness; good, goodness, etc.; lovely, loveliness; happy, happiness; etc.

The children can now perhaps write this rule: Words ending in *y* with a consonant before it, change the *y* into *i* when *-ed*, *-ly*, *-er*, *-est*, *-ful*, *-ness* are added.

(9) *Making Words by Putting dis- or mis- in Front of Them.*—Remember it is *dis-* and *mis-*, each with only one *s*: arm, disarm; satisfy, dissatisfy, ease, disease; honest, dishonest; please, displease; spell, mis-spell; spend, mis-spend; lay, mislay; behave, misbehave; obey, disobey; deed, misdeed; state, misstate; fortune, misfortune; chance, mischance; order, disorder.

Children collect as many words as possible beginning with *dis-* and *mis-*.

Just how much word building children do depends on their ability. Slow children need only a few rules, but if

they are mechanical they enjoy them, and enjoy "making words." Intelligent children like to learn more about prefixes and suffixes.

Teachers who want to go further with their children will find a book like Morell's *Complete Manual of Spelling* (Cassell) useful. It contains complete lists of prefixes and suffixes, and spelling rules, etc.

It is a help to spelling if children are allowed to collect:

(1) Words with silent letters, such as: lamb, knight, etc.

(2) Words beginning with *al-* (all): although, also, alone, almost, already, etc. Let them make a complete list. This will help them to remember that *all right* is two words.

Another interesting exercise in word making is to give the children a number of short words and let them put them together to make new words. Here is a list of words:

Any, house, under, room, up, after, bed, some, work, one, time, sick, where, stand, what, stairs, noon, keeper, shop, right.

Anyone, housekeeper, understand, workshop, upstairs, afternoon, bedroom, somewhere, somewhat, upright.

### Singular and Plural Forms

These can be taken in the spelling lessons and as occasion requires. Teach them the meanings of the words "singular" and "plural"—*singular*, one, *plural*, more than one.

Let them make their own "Singular and Plural" Booklets (Fig. 28), and enter the few rules, with examples. These booklets, again, are *Self-help Booklets*, because the children will find the examples for themselves, and write

clearly and carefully so that they can consult their books when doubtful about a plural form.

# RULES

(1) General Rule: the plural noun is formed from the singular by adding *s*, as: boy, boys; robber, robbers. This rule is so easy that the children need not give many examples.

(2) Add *-es* to the singular when nouns end in *s*, *x*, *sh*, *ch*, as: glass, glasses; box, boxes; brush, brushes; church, churches. Here the children collect as many words as possible. This helps vocabulary and spelling.

(3) When the noun ends in *f* or *fe*, the *f* is changed to *v* and *-es* or *-s* is added, as: calf, calves; knife, knives; loaf, loaves; thief, thieves, etc.

Here, again, the children should make lists of as many words as possible. They should also make a list of the exceptions that do not change the *f*, but just add *s*, as: dwarf, dwarfs; roof, roofs; cliff, cliffs; chief, chiefs; safe, safes. The children can tell from the sound how to spell these words.

(4) When the noun ends in *y* with a consonant before it, the *y* is changed to *i* and *-es* is added, as: lily, lilies; daisy, daisies; army, armies; duty, duties; cherry, cherries, etc; but: play, plays; donkey, donkeys, because there is a vowel before the *y*.

(5) Generally, when the noun ends in *o*, *-es* is added, as: cargo, cargoes; potatoes, heroes, tomatoes, negroes, volcanoes, etc.

Children like collecting words ending in *o* from their readers, etc. A few nouns ending in *o*, chiefly those to do with music, add *-s* only, as: piano, pianos; solo, solos; banjo, banjos.

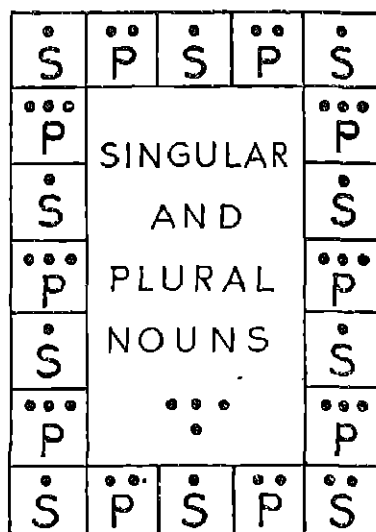


Fig 28.—COVER OF NUMBER BOOKLET.

(6) Some odd singular and plural forms:

(a) The plural of a few nouns is formed by changing the inside vowels, as: goose, geese; mouse, mice; man, men; foot, feet; tooth, teeth; woman, women; postman, postmen.

(b) The plural of two nouns is formed by adding *-en*, as: child, children (*children* is a double plural, *childer* being an old form of the plural); ox, oxen.

(c) Some nouns are not changed to show the plural: sheep, deer, salmon, fish. There are five *sheep* in that field.

(d) Some nouns have no singular, as: tongs, scissors, shears, knickers.

Children enjoy making these booklets, and through them they rarely make mistakes in singular and plural forms. The more children can be encouraged to help themselves, even in simple ways, the more sure their progress is.

## The Alphabet and Dictionary Work

If children are to help themselves to become good spellers, they should

learn to use the dictionary when they are about nine. To do this they must know the alphabet well; that is, they must know the letters in the right order. It should be learnt by heart in the first year, if not already learnt. Children must know, too, the twenty-one consonants, and the five vowels *a, e, i, o, u*, with sometimes *y*. Give them examples of words in which *y* is used—(1) as a vowel: cry, dry, Molly, daisy, happy; (2) as a consonant; yell, yes, yellow, young, yolk, etc.

Backward children in the first year should have plenty of alphabet books to read, study, and enjoy. These will be found a great help. There are a fair number of useful and interesting alphabets published.

Begin in the first year to give the children plenty of practice in arranging words in alphabetical or dictionary order, as suggested below. This exercise is especially useful to backward spellers who transpose letters. It assists them to observe words.

Dictionary lessons, spelling lessons, and writing lessons can be combined. Here are some graduated suggestions:

(1) Let the children write each word from one of their spelling lists on a small slip of paper, and then arrange the words in this way: Put all the words beginning with the letter *a* together; then all those beginning with *b*; and so on through the alphabet. When this has been done, the children copy them in their exercise books in their best handwriting. They are interested to see which letter has the most words under it. Sometimes the teacher puts a special list of words on the board to be arranged in this way.

(2) Every other day, for a week or so, let the children copy from their readers

twenty-five words and arrange them in this way. If they are bad spellers, they may copy them from their spelling books instead of from their readers.

(3) Instead of writing the words on separate slips first, let them copy thirty words from their spelling books or readers, arranging them in the order of the first letters.

When the children have had sufficient practice in the above exercises, begin to explain to them how words are arranged in a dictionary, something like this: "Suppose you wished to find the word *sugar* in a long list of *s* words. It would take some time to go through the whole list, but if the words were arranged in alphabetical order according to the *second* letter, there would be no need to go through all the list. *U* is the second letter. Does *u* come near the beginning, middle, or end of the alphabet? It comes near the end. In which part of the list shall we find the word *sugar*?"

Give the children a short time each day to arrange words alphabetically, thinking of the *second* letter of each. Here are some lists to be arranged:

(1) Ship, sugar, small, soon, sweep, safe, seven, snail, simple, spend, stars.

(2) Bend, build, bake, break, beat, border, blanket, bicycle, black, buy.

(3) Cry, clock, came, church, ceiling, corner, city, cub, cream.

(4) Plant, photo, peace, put, pray, pin, poultry, part, poppy, pyramids.

(5) Robber, rich, ready, rule, rain, reel, remove, ripe, rabbit, ruling, riding, rhyme, running.

Next give them practice in arranging words according to the *third* letter. Let the children study a list of words like the following: church, choose, cheese, children, change.

In what way are these words alike? Which letter must you think of in arranging them alphabetically?

Give the children some words to arrange according to the *third* letter:

(1) Ship, shape, shut, sheep, show, shall, shield, shy.

(2) Sad, sardine, save, sailing, sang, safety, sale, same, sago, salad, sap, Saturday, sack, sake, sand, saw, Saxon, say.

(3) Try, trick, track, true, tried, tree, trough.

Words to arrange according to their *fourth* letter:

(1) Spring, spree, sprat, sprung, spout, spray.

(2) Grammar, gian, graze, grand, grade, grave, grate, grab, graft, grape, grasp, grave, gray.

For revision, and to see how quickly they can arrange words in alphabetical order, give them a list of about twenty-six words, each beginning with a different letter, to arrange, thus: Xerxes, build, story, fable, almost, crow, yes, drink, water, every, vain, useful, goose, trying, hurrying, zigzag, jam, rich, kettle, quickly, lost, picture, orange, new, ivy, many.

Some children will take much time to arrange these words. Some may even write them on slips of paper first, so that they can move them about. It is often quite a long time before children really *know* the alphabet so that they can use it in practice. They can say it straight through, but they cannot tell quickly whereabouts in the alphabet certain letters come. Until children are at home with the alphabet, they do not want to use the dictionary.

Here are some tests on the alphabet that are helpful and interesting to the children. If these are given from time

to time, the children will be more ready to use a dictionary.

(1) Test the children to see if they can finish the alphabet beginning from any letter; for example, from K or O.

(2) Which letter of the following pairs comes first in the alphabet: *b* or *f*; *m* or *g*; *p* or *r*; *n* or *j*; *o* or *x*?

(3) Which is the first letter of the alphabet? the last? How many letters are there in all? What are the two middle letters?

(4) Print the alphabet down one side of a piece of paper. Write three words for each letter of the alphabet (except *x*).

(5) M and N are the middle letters of the alphabet. In which half of the alphabet are each of these letters: R, I, S, G, O, F, T? This is a very helpful exercise for dictionary work. The children should have a good deal of practice in finding in which half of the alphabet (A to M or N to Z) certain letters are.

Games and exercises with the telephone (see Chapters III and VIII) are useful helps for dictionary work if the children are allowed to use an old telephone directory, or the children make a telephone directory for the class, etc.

### Using a Dictionary

Children of nine or ten should have definite lessons on using the dictionary. One of the main reasons why children will not use it is, as we have said before, because it takes them so long to find a word. It is much quicker to ask, or leave the word out, or spell it wrongly! If they know in which part of the dictionary a given word occurs, they waste no time in turning the pages a few at a time, and finding the word by guessing where it is. Remind them



## WORD BUILDING, SPELLING RULES

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they must think whether the initial letter of the word comes near the beginning, the middle, or the end of the alphabet. If the word begins with T, for example, no time need be wasted in searching in the first half of the dictionary.

In a dictionary there are many pages of words beginning with the same letter. It would take a long time to find a word if it were necessary to look through the entire list. Therefore we think of the *second* letter. The second letters, also, are arranged alphabetically, as shown in the following list:

Baby, bean, bite, blanket, border, branch, button, by.

It often happens that there are many words beginning with the same first and second letters. When this is the case, think of the *third* letter in hunting for a word. When is it necessary to think of the fourth letter? Lessons on the dictionary should be taken, if possible, with groups of children. It is a good plan to divide the letters of the alphabet into four parts, about equal, and then divide the pages of the dictionary into four parts.

The alphabet may be divided something like this:

ABCDEF	GHIJKLM
NOPQRST	UVWXYZ

A word beginning with D will be found near the middle of the first division of the dictionary pages; one beginning with R will be found in the third part, and so on.

Draw the children's attention to the guide words at the top of each page of the dictionary. These help us to find words quickly.

Supposing the guide words on the page are *drop* and *drum*. The first of

these, on the left-hand side of the page, gives the *first* word that appears on the page. The other word, on the right-hand side of the page, gives the *last* word on the page.

It is usually necessary to look only at the third letter of a word, and to observe the guide words, in order to know whether the word sought is on a given page of a dictionary. In looking for the word *drug* we find that it comes on the page with the guide words *drop* and *drum*, because the second guide word is *drum*, and the *g* in *drug* comes before *m*. The word *dry* is not on this page, because its third letter, *y*, comes after *u* in *drum*, and *drum* is the last word.

If children use the *guide words* in this way, they will avoid wasting time by hunting for a word on the wrong page. They can turn directly to the columns where the word will be found.

Give the children plenty of practice in finding words with the help of the guide words. They will enjoy having words put on the board and seeing who can find them first. Put a list of words on the board. As a child finds a word, he copies it, and its meaning. Children soon become interested in the dictionary if lessons are given from time to time. Point out the three main uses of the dictionary—to find quickly:

(1) The *correct spelling*.

(2) The *correct pronunciation*.

Show them how each word in the dictionary is printed to show the sounds of the vowels. Each word is also divided into syllables and accented, as *butterfly*, but' ter fly. The key words that show the sounds of the vowels will interest them greatly. Every child should know at least the long and short vowel sounds and how they are shown.

## GENERAL ENGLISH

(3) *Meanings*.—Give the children practice in finding the meanings of words in their dictionaries. Write sentences on the board, and underline in each sentence the word the meaning of which they are to find. The children must select the meaning that fits the sense in which the word is used; for example:

In his hand he held a brand that lit up the cave.

The old sailor was fond of telling yarns.

She took the pitcher to the well to get water.

He pitched his tent in an open field.

He went to the pantry to get some bread.

In jumping a deep ditch he fell in,

but a man saw his plight and helped him out.

In the autumn he liked to help in the orchard.

I like to take a trip around the wharves to see the ships.

The team set off in good spirits for the match.

There are many errors in your book.

Children can never become independent workers until they learn to use a dictionary properly. It is folly to expect them to be self-reliant unless we give them the means to be so. Far too often children leave school never having learnt how to use a dictionary. If a beginning is made in the top classes of the Primary Schools, the work can be continued in the Senior Schools—and the use of a dictionary become a *habit*.

A albatross	E eagle
B blackbird	F finch
C canary chaffinch	G goose
D dove	H hawk

Fig. 29.—INSIDE PAGES OF ALPHABET BOOK.

### Alphabet Activities

There are many interesting alphabet books that children like to make. These both help their spelling and increase their vocabulary. They can be made in connection with a variety of school subjects and the interests of the children.

A *Simple Alphabet Booklet* for children to make. Fold two pieces of paper, about 10 in. by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in., in half, and place one within the other. This makes a booklet 5 in. by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in., with six pages inside that can be used. Divide each page into four parts by drawing three straight lines across it horizontally. The four divisions can be made equal if the pages are folded twice crossways, and lines drawn on the creases. There are now twenty-four spaces in the book. Print on the left-hand side of each space a large letter of the alphabet, beginning with A (Fig. 29). In the last space the three letters X, Y, Z must be printed.

On the cover a suitable picture is drawn and title printed. These booklets

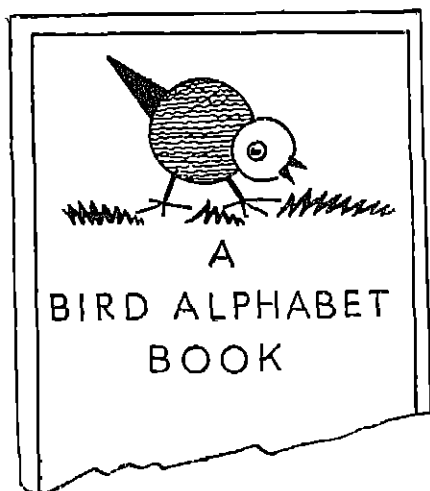


Fig. 30—COVER OF ALPHABET BOOK.

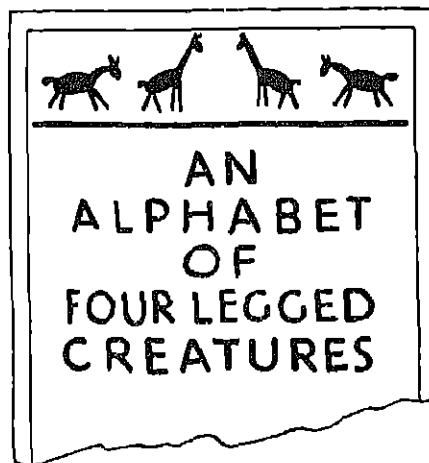


Fig. 31.—COVER OF BOOKLET.

are quickly made, and, as they do not occupy the children too long, many varied alphabet books can be made. Junior children like something that can be finished fairly quickly.

Their first book may be a *Bird Alphabet Book* (Fig. 30). The cover is decorated with a plump little bird cut from brown paper. The children write the names of birds in the different spaces inside the books; birds whose names begin with A in the A space, and so on (Fig. 29). They keep a look out for the names of birds in the nature-study lessons, in geography lessons, and in fairy-tales and fables, etc. They also look at bird books in the library and at home. They may, if they like, put in words like *chick*, *chicken*, *duckling*, *nestling*, etc. Some spaces will have many names, as the space for the C words. The children will probably find at least one word for every letter except X and Z.

Fig 31 shows an *Alphabet Booklet of Four-legged Creatures*. The children collect names of animals at home and far away. It interests them to see which letter gets the most names. An

# PUNCTUATION: CHILDREN AS FINDERS AND DOERS

## Finding Out How Conversation is Written

INTELLIGENT children of eight, and children of nine and ten, have learnt a good deal about punctuation by observation and by their written work. But, on the other hand, many children punctuate their work badly through lack of interest and observation. They need to have their attention drawn to the different marks found in their reading books. Definite lessons must be given, but lessons that put the children in the place of discoverers. They are to discover and make the rules. All children are interested in conversation. Lead them to find out how conversation is written. With the eight-year-olds or backward children, the lesson might be taken like this:

You all like books in which people talk to one another. Have you ever thought about the way in which conversation is written? Here is part of the story of "Little Red Riding Hood":

Red Riding Hood said, "What great eyes you have."

The Wolf said, "The better to see you."

Red Riding Hood said, "What great ears you have."

The Wolf said, "The better to hear you."

Who is speaking in the first sentence? Read the words spoken, and nothing else. How are they set off from the rest of the sentence? We call the exact words used by Red Riding Hood a *quotation*, and the marks that enclose them are called "quotation marks."

Answer these questions about the next three sentences: Who is speaking? Which is the quotation? Which is the explaining part of the sentence telling who is speaking? Which part is enclosed in quotation marks?

Look at some stories in your reading books, and notice how the reader is helped to understand that a sentence contains a quotation. Look at the first word of each quotation. It is not always the first word of the entire sentence, as you can see by looking at the sentences on the board, but it begins with a capital letter. Then a comma sets off the explaining part of the sentence from the quotation. This is an important use of the comma. If you study written conversation carefully, you will soon remember these three rules: (1) A quotation begins with a capital letter. (2) It is usually set off from the rest of a sentence by a comma. (3) It is enclosed in quotation marks.

The Red Riding Hood sentences might have been written in this way:

"What great eyes you have," cried Red Riding Hood.

## PUNCTUATION

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"The better to see you," said the Wolf.

"What great ears you have," cried Red Riding Hood.

"The better to hear you," said the Wolf.

How do these sentences differ from the first four? Show that they follow the same rules.

Can you find a new use for the comma in the following sentence?

"Grandmother, what great eyes you have," said Red Riding Hood.

Notice the name of the person spoken to, *Grandmother*, is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. Look for the comma in each of these sentences: "Be quick, Dick." "Tony, come here."

Find a story in your reader with conversation in it. Study it carefully and notice the punctuation. Read it aloud. Your voice must show who is speaking, and where a sentence ends.

### WRITING CONVERSATION

Choose a piece of conversation you like, and copy it carefully. Put in the quotation marks and punctuation marks. Check your work by reading it over again, and comparing it with the original. Make up some conversations and write them. Keep at first to two sentences, thus:

"Where is my hat?" asked careless Jack.

"Why, on your head," said his mother.

Notice in the first sentence a question mark takes the place of a comma

The above lesson is suitable for the eight- and nine-year-olds. Although they may not be able to write original conversations, and find it difficult to

introduce them into their stories, such a lesson as the above *opens their eyes*, so that they will notice and understand what they have been seeing ever since they learnt to read. Little punctuation is needed in writing simple stories and letters that do not tell what people say, but conversation needs a good deal of punctuation. It is a help to future work if children notice and understand the punctuation in the conversations that they read. In this way they can help themselves. Tell them sometimes what to look out for in their reading; for example, write the following sentences on the board, and tell them to find a new use of the comma:

"Are you going to the seaside this summer?" asked Ann.

"No, I shall remain at home. Are you going?" said Jane.

"Yes, I am going next week," replied Ann.

The children see that the comma is used with *yes* and *no*. Sometimes it is a good plan to write sentences on the board and let the children come out one at a time and place the quotation marks, commas, etc., where they should be.

Children also enjoy having sentences to complete:

Tom's father said in an angry tone,  
...

The clock said, ...

..., exclaimed Jane.

Jack said to his father, .

Alice cried out, ...

Jane asked ...

..., questioned my uncle.

The fox went away saying, ...

..., shouted the man.

It is some time before children are able to distinguish between direct and indirect quotations. The well-known

*Alphabet of Towns* is useful in connection with geography and the use of capital letters. It is well for them to be familiar with towns near them, and famous towns.

Other interesting alphabet books are:  
 (1) *Friends in Story Land*. This can include nursery rhymes and fairy-tales.  
 (2) *An Alphabet of Games and Sports*.  
 (3) *A Fisherman's Alphabet*. (4) *A Toy Alphabet*. (5) *A Green-grocer's Alphabet*. (6) *A Camping-out Alphabet*. (7) *Alphabets of Boys' and Girls' Names*, etc. (8) *Zoo Alphabet*.

### Catalogues

Talk to the children about catalogues, and if necessary show them some. Let them find out if they are like dictionaries. They will like to make a catalogue of flowers. This can be in the form of a panorama book (see Volume IV, NATURE STUDY SECTION). Fold a strip of paper  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in. long into eight equal parts. This makes a panorama book of eight narrow pages, quite a useful shape for a catalogue.

A flower design is put on the cover. Inside, a large A is put at the head of the first page. When a child has found all the names of well-known flowers beginning with A (there are not many),

a line is drawn across the page, and a large B is printed, and so on. The pupil keeps the list for each letter open until she is sure she has all the names of well-known flowers. Notebooks are useful for collecting names, because the children often find names before the spaces for them are ready. The children look in parks and gardens and ask the names of flowers. They put a star against every flower in their catalogues that *they have seen*. This encourages them to look for flowers.

They can make tree catalogues and vegetable catalogues in the same way. These booklets will prove useful and interesting in connection with nature-study lessons. Catalogues of furniture or of crockery can also be made. A picture of a pretty teapot or plate may be drawn on the cover, or they may be cut from coloured paper and pasted on. Sentences describing the different things for sale can also be added, and prices.

The children must think of headings for each catalogue; for example, for furniture—*Bedroom Furniture*, *Dining-room Furniture*, etc. Finding headings needs thought. Making catalogues is a pleasant way of revising words. The children can add words they have met in their reading; for example, *pitcher*.

Fig. 32, "Moving Day," shows a booklet that all children like making. Inside they write the names of the things moved. They try to move a house-load of furniture without making a spelling mistake. They can draw stick figures carrying out the furniture, etc., and write words or sentences underneath. Some children may like to tell a story about moving day. For other suggestions, and a story about moving

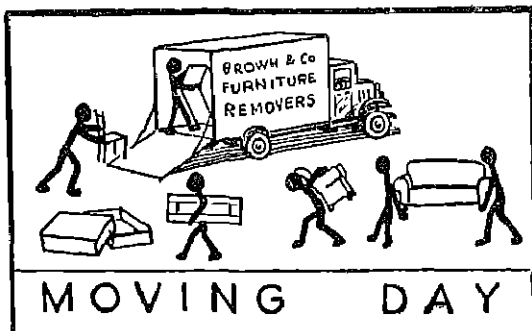


Fig. 32.—COVER OF BOOKLET.

day, see *English of Your Daily Life*, Book III (Longmans). For example, they can try to arrange in alphabetical order the names of the things moved.

Older children, who are reading many books for themselves, should be encouraged to keep a list of them. They make booklets, decorating the covers with books, or a child reading, etc. Inside they write the names of the books and the authors, arranging the authors' names in alphabetical order. Intelligent children may arrange their books also

under headings, as: *Fairy-tales, Tales of Adventure, Tales of Home Life*, etc. This is a good preparation for the use one day of the public library.

The children will like to make, in much the same way, *card catalogues* of their class library books. Writing the number of the book, the author's name, and the title is a good exercise in careful writing. For other exercises on the *library*, see *English of Your Daily Life*, Book IV, Chapter 8, "The Library" (Longmans).

habit of regarding as direct quotations words that follow "he said," and similar expressions, must be checked from the start. It helps children, when they are uncertain, to imagine themselves to be the speakers, and to express the quoted words in the precise words of the speaker.

In relating personal experiences, in telling anecdotes to the class, in writing familiar letters, children often quote other people, but as a rule they do it *indirectly*, as, "she said she was going out." The use of direct quotations needs to be taught, both to encourage children to use them to enliven their stories and to teach them to write these quotations correctly. If children begin to notice quotation marks in their reading at eight or nine, they will use them in their story telling at nine or ten.

It is interesting to let pupils of ten or eleven compare two paragraphs, one told in direct and the other in indirect speech. The children then see how much more lively and interesting the direct quotation narrative is, thus:

#### THE CRAB AND HER MOTHER

(1) An old crab asked a young crab why she walked in such a crooked manner. She ought to walk straight. The young crab told her mother to show her the way.

(2) An old crab said to a young one, "Why do you walk in such a crooked manner? Walk straight."

"Mother, show me the way," said the young crab.

Both stories tell what the child and the mother said, but only one uses the *exact* words of the speakers. The pupils will appreciate the added force and life that the direct quotations give the second story.

Plenty of practice will help to form the habit of using *direct quotations* in oral stories, and then to transfer this skill to written stories.

On the mechanical side, short humorous anecdotes are useful for children to copy and for dictation. The children may make a book of their own or a class book of amusing short stories. Explain to them that it is *allowable* to write a very short story in *one* paragraph, even though it contains direct quotations, but that it is better to put the words of each speaker in a *separate paragraph* if the conversation contains *more than a single remark on each side*.

Stories like the following are useful for their books:

(1) "I wouldn't cry like that," said a lady to a little boy.

"I don't care how you cry," sobbed the little boy. "This is my way." (Two paragraphs.)

(2) A mother and her little daughter were at tea. "These little fish are often eaten by larger fish," said her mother. "But how do the fish open the tins?" asked Mary. (One paragraph.)

Encourage the children to find titles for each little story. Besides stories, the pupils will write conversations between different people or creatures, as: (1) An old boy and a new boy at school. (2) A fishmonger and a shopper. (3) Ann and Dick talk about their pets. (4) Betty asks her father questions. (5) A cat and a dog. (6) The toys at night. (7) A wild bird and a canary. (8) A little girl and her mother in a sweet shop, and so on. Some children enjoy writing conversations that might go on at meal-times, breakfast-time, dinner-time, etc.; see *English of Your Daily Life*, Books I to IV (Longmans).



## PUNCTUATION

### MAKING A BOOK OF CONVERSATIONS (Fig 33)

Remind the children that they must help themselves to remember what they have been taught or what they have found out. By keeping their eyes open they can make a useful book of conversations, containing examples of all the rules they have learnt. They write several sentences for each rule, and then try to write the rule, thus:

(1) The Big Bear said, "Someone has been sitting on my chair."

"Someone has been sitting on my chair," said the Big Bear.

Comma to separate the explaining part of the sentence from the direct quotation. Quotation marks to enclose the direct quotation. Capital letter for the first word of the quotation.

(2) "Dick, look what I have found," cried Mary.

"Look, Dick, I have found a penny," cried Mary.

"I hope you are quite well, Mrs. Brown," said Mrs. Lee.

The name of the person spoken to is set off from the rest of the sentence by one or two commas.

(3) "May I have an apple?" asked Tom.

A question mark takes the place of the comma at the end of the quotation because the quotation is a question.

(4) "Yes, you are right, Tom," said Jane.

"No, I am not going home," declared Bob.

Yes, and no when it means the opposite to yes, are set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma. (In the case of "I have no money," no is not the opposite to yes.)

(5) "Mother," said the young crab, "show me how."

A "broken" quotation; *show* must not have a capital letter because it is not the *beginning* of a quotation. The complete quotation is "Mother, show me how." "Said the young crab" is put in the middle of the quotation. (Very few children will notice this rule.)

Two or three interesting anecdotes are also written in their books as models, also a conversation between two people or two animals, etc.

Telephone conversations have already been dealt with. Children realize that writing telephone conversations is like writing plays. There is little difficulty in punctuation. Some children like to make booklets about the telephone and speaking by telephone.

### Punctuation: Some Projects

Children are at first not interested in punctuation. It is to them only a nuisance. Clever children with a good flow of words resent having to stop and put in these little marks. In spite of learning rules, or finding out rules for

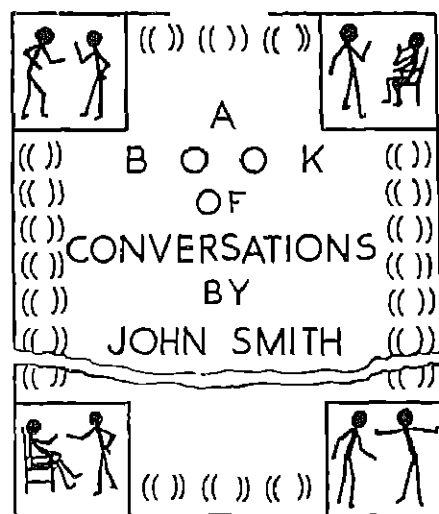


FIG 33.—DESIGN FOR COVER, USING QUOTATION MARKS.

themselves, they do not often apply them! How many teachers in upper classes complain that children do not know when to use quotation marks or commas! But if their interest can be aroused over the little, despised marks their work improves. Interest can be aroused through oral work and projects.

It is when children are past the simple-sentence stage that difficulties with punctuation begin.

*An oral approach* (see Chapter III) is interesting, and helps children to correct their own faults. A passage can be read in such a way that a child hears where the natural breaks come. If they give in a passage wrongly punctuated, read it to them so that they hear where the pauses come, or the questions, etc., and can fill in the necessary marks. Encourage the children to check their punctuation by reading their compositions aloud. The punctuation marks are to help the reader to understand. They must be put in only if really necessary.

"Inverted commas" or "quotation marks" for direct speeches are also helped by oral work. As a child reads a sentence such as "The cat said, 'Good morning, Blackbird, you seem very happy today,'" he will naturally pause before making the cat's speech (hence the comma), and he will raise his voice to make it (hence the inverted or turned [upside down] commas and the capital letter for the new sentence spoken by the cat). The second pair of raised commas close the speech. Similarly, by expression of the voice only at first, the class should judge when an interrogation or exclamation mark is needed.

The children are now ready to make

a self-help booklet about Punctuation, similar to that they made for Conversations. They look through their readers and notice where commas are used, full stops, apostrophes, quotation marks, etc. They can copy some sentences they think they will need in their notebooks, ready for their booklets.

They should be on the look out, not only for the rules they have been taught, but for any new rules about punctuation marks. They write the sentences first and then the rules, thus:

#### *The Full Stop and Its Uses*

(1) I threw the ball over the fence.

A full stop is used at the end of every sentence that tells something.

(2) Sept. Tues. ins.

To show that a word has been cut short.

(3) J. H. Smith, W. B. Brown.

After an initial.

#### *The Question Mark*

To whom did you give your ball?

#### *The Comma*

The children find a great many uses for the comma, especially in letter writing (see Chapter IX) and in written conversations. Many children will discover the use of the comma when writing a list of names, or actions, etc., as: In the window I saw apples, pears, plums, and peaches. He came along the road hopping, skipping, and jumping.

#### *The Apostrophe*

(1) John's hat. My sister's book.

An apostrophe and s are added to a person's name to denote possession.

(2) I can't swim. I don't want to go.

An apostrophe is used to show that a letter or letters are left out. *Can't* = *cannot*; *don't* = *do not*.

The children will find many examples of contractions in the conversations in their reading books. Remind them that these forms are used only in conversation.

## *Quotation Marks or Raised Commas*

(1) I like reading "Alice in Wonderland." I have learnt a poem called, "Rain in Summer."

The children write the rule.

(2) "Look at that huge snowflake," cried Mary.

Children enjoy collecting as many varied examples as possible under each heading; that is, for each punctuation mark. They like filling up these books because it is their job, their project. By collecting examples first they are learning the rule, and when they come to write the rule they understand it. If they write the rule first, they probably will not understand it. Some like to collect their examples in their notebooks before they write them in their self-help books.

They think of ways of decorating their books (see Figs. 34 and 35). As far as possible, they make use of punctuation marks, and other marks used in writing, in their decorations on the covers.

The booklets become more interesting to them, and punctuation more "alive," by letting them act a play called "The Punctuation Party." It will be found among the plays in *Up Goes the Curtain* (University of London Press). Children who have read and acted this play will not easily forget the punctuation marks, and what happened to the children who left them out! They will want to make two or three booklets about the punctuation people, as the play will suggest

pictures for the covers (Figs. 34, 35). On one cover there can be drawings of Mr. Peter Period (*period*, they learn, is another name for full stop) and his little Full Stops; Mr. Charley Comma and his little Commas; Mr. Eager Exclamation Mark, and Mr. Quentin Question Mark, as in Fig. 34.

On the second cover Miss Hannah Hyphen is drawn with her umbrella (which looks like a hyphen), and the troublesome twins, the Misses Quotation Marks, as in Fig. 35.

Most of the children are interested in the new "marks" that they learn from the play: the *hyphen* from Miss Hannah Hyphen, and the marks of the two dignified people, Mr. Colon and Mr. Semi-Colon, who dress alike although one is smaller than the other. There is no need for them to use these two marks, but they can be told that a

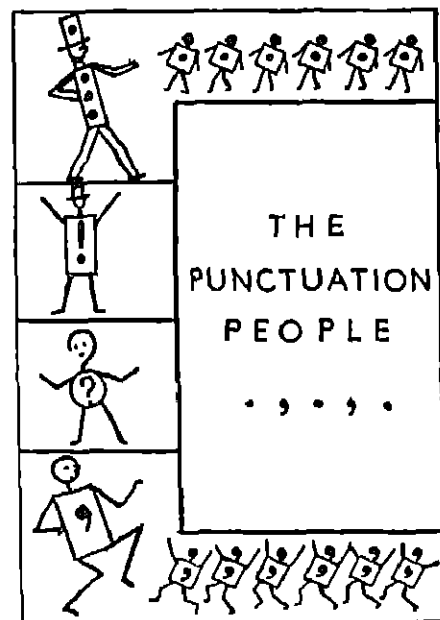


Fig. 34—BOOKLET FOR RULES FOR PUNCTUATION.

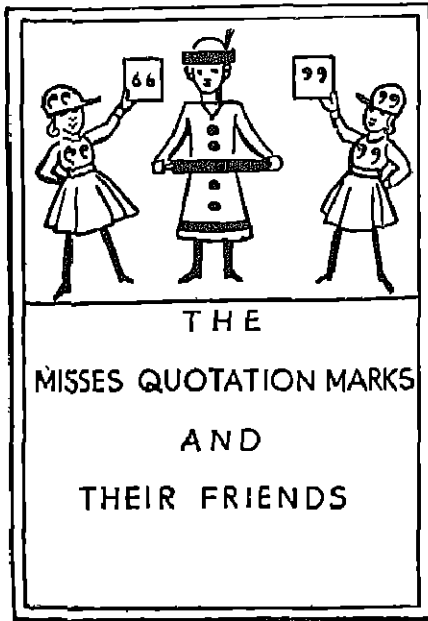


Fig. 35.—BOOKLET ABOUT QUOTATION MARKS, ETC.

semi-colon indicates a longer pause than a comma, but not such a complete break as a full stop. The colon is used for "as follows." It means something is to follow, as:

"I remember two lines of my poem:  
'Speed, bonny boat, like a bird on the wing,

Over the sea to Skye.'"

The children must have a real hunt to find examples of the use of the colon and semi-colon in their books. The finding of them gives them much joy, and they copy them in their punctuation books in triumph. Often the teacher can give the children a clue as to where to find examples of the use of the colon or semi-colon, by saying, "Look in *Projects for the Junior School*, Book I" (Harrap). If they still cannot find a colon, they can be given a page; page 12, for example.

Children will also find it interesting and useful to collect examples of words made from two or more words joined by a hyphen or hyphens, as, twenty-one, up-to-date, motor-car, watering-pot, water-wheel, etc. They have already collected compound words formed of two words, as, newspaper, daylight, workman, cornfields, fireplace, etc.

#### CAPITALS

A similar project to the above can be carried out in connection with capitals. Children of nine or ten can collect all the different uses of the capital letters that they have found or learnt. In Class I they will have learnt many uses. They know that the first word of every sentence begins with a capital; also the proper names of people, places, towns, rivers, etc.; the names of the days of the week and the months; the letter *I* and the interjection *O* are written with capitals, and so on. All the many uses may be jumbled in their minds.

Remind the children that they have been told *some* of the uses of capital letters, but there is another way to learn besides being told. Many people who have been able to attend school for only a short time have learned not by being taught, but by observing how capitals were used in letters, papers, and books they read. They thought about their uses until they discovered good reasons for them, and then they made for themselves the rules. This is the self-help method of learning—the method they must follow as they get older.

They must imagine they are going to teach themselves about the use of capitals with the help of their reading books. As they find the use of a capital they write it down in their notebooks. Then they enter the example and the

## PUNCTUATION

rules in a special self-help booklet, the cover of which is decorated with capital letters. Besides the old rules they will find many new ones, especially if they look in *various kinds* of books—history books, geography books, etc. They can copy new uses of capital letters in their self-help books, even if they cannot write a rule for the uses.

None of the children's books when finished will be very complete, but the fact that everything in it has been *found by them* and arranged by them is very important.

In one intelligent class of nine- and ten-year-olds, the following rules were "discovered":

On the deck of his ship stood *Captain* Smith.

Betty ran to fetch *Dr.* Anderson.

This is a picture of *President* Roosevelt.

I saw *Princess* Elizabeth yesterday.

Jane met *Uncle* John and *Aunt* Alice at the station.

They had to collect many examples before they were able to state the rule: titles are written with capital letters when used with names. Many children tried to write a complete list of titles. Another good find was that the words *north*, *south*, *east*, *west*, *north-west*, *north-east*, etc., are sometimes written with capital letters. This use was discovered in geography books and readers; for example.

Captain Peary explored the trackless *North*.

His uncle moved from New York and settled in the *West*.

No child could find a rule for this use, though they might have done had they found more examples. The rule was given them: The words *north*, *south*, *east*, and *west* are

written with capitals when they refer to sections or parts of the country, but *not* when they refer to *direction*, as: The boat sailed north-west, etc.

In their history lessons and history reading books the children found new uses for capital letters: (1) For periods of time—the Stone Age, the Pyramid Age, the Bronze Age, etc. (2) For great events—the Battle of Marathon, the Norman Conquest, and so on.

An enterprising child, not content with saying that capital letters were used for all the important words in the title of a book, made a list of different kinds of titles:

*Books:* Alice in Wonderland, Mopsa the Fairy.

*Short Stories:* The Ugly Duckling, The Dog in the Manger.

*Poems:* Windy Nights, The Fairy Shoemaker.

*Magazines and Comic Papers:* The Boys' Own Paper, Sunny Stories.

*School Books:* The Headway History, Book I.

*Newspapers:* Daily Mirror, Daily Mail.

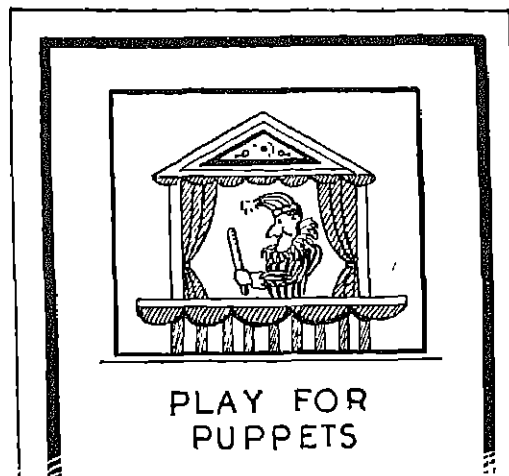


Fig. 36—BOOK FOR CONVERSATIONS

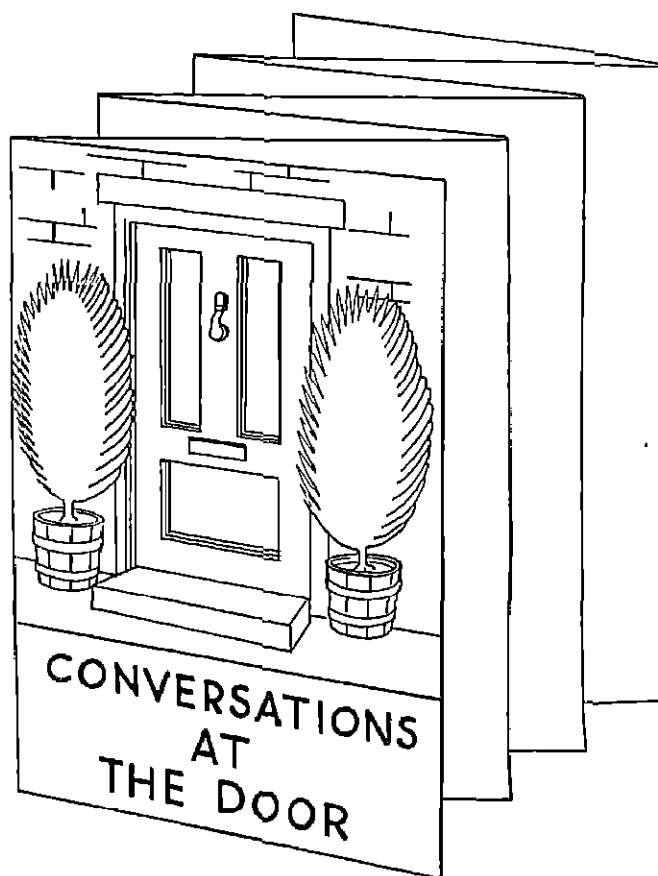


Fig. 37.—A PANORAMA BOOK.

Children remember what they find out for themselves, they often forget what they are taught. The more we can place children in the attitude of discoverers the better. There are plenty of ways of devising things for the children to find out. Revision can be a process of finding out. Say to the children, "Imagine you do not know the uses of the apostrophe; look through your books and find examples of its use, copy them, and see what rules you can write."

Intelligent children often arrange their finds in two or three groups, thus: (1) *Joan's house*, a *cat's tongue*, a *bird's*

song, *horses' hoofs*, *Alfred's candle*, *one's fingers*, all taken from *Projects for the Junior School*, Book I (Harrap).

(2) *Horses' hoofs*, *birds' songs*. The children found it difficult to find examples of the plural form of the possessive, so they made them up!

(3) I don't (do not know), It isn't (is not), That's (is) all, I'm (am) so hungry, It won't (will not) matter, etc. The children have no trouble in finding examples of contractions. Copying them from well-written books means they will learn correct forms.

This method of letting children find out things for themselves is especially useful when getting them to study simple text-books in history and geography.

(See these Sections.) Even the dullest child can find out something and get pleasure from it. The careful turning of pages, and the scanning of pages to find something, are a valuable exercise. In the case of duller children more clues should be given them, otherwise they are sure to choose the wrong books and become disheartened. An intelligent child looking for contractions almost at once chooses a page of conversation.

#### A PUPPET BOOKLET (Fig. 36)

The children make booklets in which they write conversations suitable for

puppet plays. If they have any puppets, they can plan their conversations to suit these puppets. Some may like to adapt some story or part of a story from one of their readers; for example: "The Travels of a Fox" in *The Romance of Reading*, Book II, "Happy Hours" (Oxford University Press). Some children like to write a conversation from a well-known fairy-tale; for example, the scenes between Red Riding Hood and the Wolf. Many children show much judgment in the choice of episodes and conversations.

## CONVERSATIONS AT THE DOOR (Fig. 37)

This can be a most amusing booklet. The children make a panorama book. On the cover they draw a door, as in Fig. 37. Inside, they write conversations between the housewife and the visitors to her door. These can be short con-

versations, a page in length, or longer ones. Many children enjoy planning conversations between the housewife and every person who is likely to come to the door—the milkman, baker, coalman, dustman, rag-and-bone man, etc. It is sometimes wise to limit the children to four conversations only. Then the children choose more carefully. Some try to find four less obvious people than those given above; for example, a man selling vacuum cleaners, or some patent, a woman collecting money for a hospital, a man asking for chairs to mend, and so on. Some of the conversations are often quite amusing, especially those of the older children. One child wrote a conversation between the hostess saying good-bye to a visitor, a never-ending good-bye! The children should be advised to keep their conversations short. They much enjoy hearing some of the conversations read in class.

# TITLES, LETTER WRITING AND PROJECTS

## Titles

INTERESTING projects and activities arise from the study of titles—the titles of books and the titles of pictures. Children know vaguely what titles are. They know the titles of stories they have read, they have found titles in the Contents (Chapter II), and so on, but it takes them a little time to grasp what a title is, and how to think of titles, a very valuable exercise. Some children confuse a title with a sentence. To make sure they understand titles, and to interest them in titles, a lesson might well be given as outlined below:

The name of a book or a story or a poem is called its *title*. Name the titles of some stories you have read in your silent reading periods. (Get titles from as many children as possible. It is surprising how few titles children remember. They are not accustomed to look carefully at titles or the names of authors.) Here are some titles written on the board for you to read:

Little Red Riding Hood.

The Dog in the Manger.

A Visit to Santa Claus.

The Travels of a Fox.

Learning to Swim.

Why the Owl Flies at Night.

Does the first title tell anything about *Little Red Riding Hood*, or just name her? A title is a kind of label, to tell

you what the story is about, something like the label on a pot of jam, which says, "Strawberry Jam." A label might say, "There is strawberry jam in this pot," but the words *Strawberry Jam* are just as good as a sentence. Read the other titles. Do they simply name things, or are they sentences? As a rule, titles are not sentences. Which of the titles on the board are most like sentences? A good title is short. It names something and leaves the story to tell all about it.

Look again at the titles, and see which words begin with capital letters. The capital letters make the important words stand out very clearly. Which words in the titles are not written with capital letters?

Look at the titles of the stories and poems in your reading book. Which titles do you think are good? Does any title make you want to read the story? Does any title give the story away? (Intelligent children enjoy discussing titles, and the lesson can be very profitable.)

Now think of the titles of some short stories that you might tell, stories about your pets, toys, baby brothers or sisters, etc. Try to make your title tell clearly what your story is about. Thus, you might say to yourself, "I am going to tell about a clever trick of my dog Snap. So I will have for my title, 'Snap's



## TITLES, LETTER WRITING, PROJECTS

Clever Trick.” Why is this a better title than “My Dog Snap,” or “Snap’s Clever Tricks”?

“Snap’s Clever Trick” tells exactly what your story is about, it also helps you to keep to the point when you tell the story, and interests the listeners. They want to know what the trick was.

Supposing you were going to tell how you lost your penknife, and found it some days afterwards in a most unexpected place, which of these five titles do you think the best? “How I Lost and Found My Penknife,” “My Lost Penknife,” “How I Lost My Penknife,” “How I Found My Penknife,” “An Unexpected Find.”

Write down six titles of short stories you can tell. Think! First make a sentence in your head telling what your story is going to be about; from this sentence make a title.

### MAKING A BOOK OF TITLES

Make a little booklet about the size of your Bird Alphabet (Chapter VII). Decorate the cover in a suitable way; for example, cut out two pieces of coloured paper to represent the covers of books. Print a short title on each, and paste them on the cover of your booklet, as in Fig. 38. Print underneath, “A Book of Titles.” Keep some pages for the titles of stories you have read, and some for the titles of poems you have read or learnt. As you read new stories or poems, add the titles to your lists. If you like, write in only your favourite stories or poems. By the time your booklet is filled up, you will have taught yourself how to write titles correctly.

### TITLES OF PICTURES

It is interesting choosing titles for pictures. First study the picture well,

and say what it is about. Then decide on the title. Bring some pictures to school, and find titles for them. There are many suitable pictures in newspapers. Make a little booklet of pictures and titles. For this booklet collect a number of small pictures, pictures of shoes, dogs, cats, hats, coats, motor-cars, cooks, etc., such as you will find in newspapers. Under each picture write an interesting title. It will help you to find interesting titles for your pictures if you think of stories that they might illustrate; thus, for a pair of shoes, the title might be “Betty’s New Shoes”, or for a motor-car, “Daddy’s New Car,” etc. Cut your pictures out carefully when you have chosen them. Paste them in your book to leave plenty of room for the title. You may wish to write more than one title under your picture.

See if you can find pictures for these

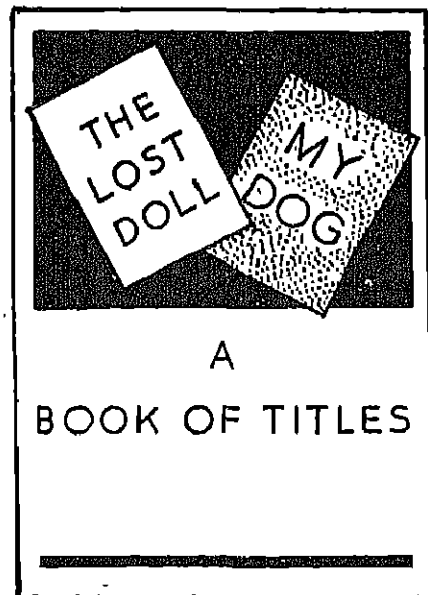


Fig. 38—BOOKLET FOR HOW TO WRITE TITLES

titles: "A Faithful Friend," "My Baby," "A Smart Hat," "My Sister's New Coat," "A Rainy Day."

#### MAKING A PICTURE GALLERY

This is an interesting project. For your picture gallery you must select your pictures much more carefully. Perhaps you can find pictures of "Children at Play," "An Autumn Day," etc. (see Chapter III). Mount the pictures carefully on brown paper to represent a frame. The titles should be printed on slips of paper and pasted underneath. See what a pretty picture gallery you can make. Other classes may like to come and see it. You may like to make a catalogue of your pictures. It is worth taking time to collect a good set. You can discuss the pictures in your art lessons, and decide if they are good enough for your gallery.

If, by the above suggestions, the children's interest is sufficiently aroused, they will think of other projects. They may become interested in great artists and their pictures. Postcards can be obtained of these, and a really fine picture gallery built up. The children are very interested in the titles of these "real pictures"; for example, "Feeding Her Birds." They will take more interest in their pictures at home and at school. Details for carrying out this project will be found in *Projects for the Junior School*, Book II, Chapter X, "Pictures of Famous Artists" (Harrap).

Another project that is almost sure to arise from the above is the making of a picture gallery from their own drawings and paintings. Most classes who undertake the above projects like to open their picture gallery on one day a week or a fortnight.

#### Letter Writing

The following outline of a lesson on letter writing may help children to help themselves and suggest projects:

There are many different kinds of letters. The kind of letter you know best is perhaps a simple *note* that you bring to school to ask one of your friends to tea, or a note written to another class to ask them to come to see your "picture gallery." Here is a note:

Dear Bob,

Will you come to tea with me after school on Wednesday? I have such a surprise for you. You will never guess what it is. Come as early as you can.

Your friend,

Jim.

Study this note. Notice the comma after *Bob*. This comma is always used to mark off the name of the person from what is said to him. At the close, a comma separates *Your friend* from the name that follows. Notice how these words are arranged. Make sure that you can spell every word in the letter and then copy it.

Now write an answer to this note, and see if you can arrange it properly.

Here is a letter to copy. How does it differ from the note above? This letter is to be posted. Notice the address at the top. Why is there no need to put an address on the note?

34 Bolton Street,  
Bristol,  
Somerset,  
24th June, 1947.

Dear Joan,

I have just learnt how to make buns. Will you come to tea next

## TITLES, LETTER WRITING, PROJECTS

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Thursday about four o'clock, and taste one? I will make them specially nice for you. I also want to show you my new kitten. I do hope you can come.

Your loving friend,  
Betty.

There are several things to learn about this letter. First look at the *heading* at the very top. What does the first part of the heading tell you about the girl who wrote the letter? It tells where she lives, or her *address*, so that the one who answers the letter knows where to send the reply, or how to address the envelope. The heading, therefore, is a most important part of a letter. Underneath the address comes the date—the day, month, and year—telling when the letter was written. Why do you think the date is important? Study the letter carefully to see how the *heading*, the greeting (*Dear Joan*), and the ending are arranged. Notice carefully where commas and full stops are used.

Now write a letter yourself. It may be necessary to practise writing the heading, because some addresses take up more room than others. When you are sure you can space the heading properly, write the complete letter.

Address an envelope to Betty. You must give her a surname. Cut a piece of paper the size of an envelope and arrange the address on it. This, too, needs practice. Do not crowd the address near the top of the envelope, because room must be left for the stamps.

### TEACHING YOURSELF TO WRITE LETTERS

Make a booklet about "Letters."  
Draw an envelope on the cover of your

book. Paste a used stamp in one corner, and address the envelope to yourself in your best handwriting. Practise writing your name and address on pieces of paper cut the size of an envelope before you write on the cover of your book. Remember to write your full address. You must give the number of your house, the name of your street or road, your town or village, and *county*. The name of your county is most important. It helps the men who have to sort the letters if you write your address fully and clearly. Underneath the envelope you have drawn, write the title of your book, "A Book about Letters," or "How to Write Letters," etc.

On the first page of your book write a model "note." See that it is correct in every detail. Write a second note in answer to your first one, so that you have two good notes.

On the next page write a model letter. Write it first in your notebook, and when you are sure it is correct copy it in your book.

Then you must have a page about addressing envelopes. Bring some used envelopes to school, and notice how they are addressed. Find out especially how people's names are written on envelopes, as: Mrs. T. Brown, Mr. F. H. Smith, Miss Mary Jones. *Mrs.* (pronounced *misiz*) is used in front of the names of married women. *Mr.* (pronounced *mister*) is used with the names of men, and *Miss* with the names of girls and unmarried women. Collect and write as many different ways of writing names on envelopes as you can. Sometimes Christian names are written in full, sometimes only the first letters (initials), as: Mr. Fred Roland Brown or Mr. F. R. Brown, or F. R. Brown,

Esq. (Esq. is a short form for *esquire*, meaning gentleman.) Notice how the names of doctors and clergymen are written on envelopes. If you keep your eyes open, you can learn a great deal to put in your letter book. It should be useful to you, because you can always refer to it if you do not know how to direct an envelope.

Other useful pages will contain different ways of beginning and ending letters. There are many different ways of ending letters. Write some in your notebook first, and then group them according to the people written to, thus:

(1) To fathers and mothers: Your loving daughter, With much love from, With love and kisses from, etc.

(2) To aunts and uncles: Your loving niece, Your affectionate nephew, Yours affectionately, etc.

(3) To friends: Your friend, Your loving friend, Yours affectionately, Your sincere friend, Yours sincerely, etc.

You may think of some endings you like better than these. Remember there are many other different ways of ending letters; for example, business letters, that you will have to learn one day. Put in the endings most useful to you, and notice how the words are spelt.

Another useful page is one containing the short forms of the names of the month. There are short forms for all the names except *May, June, July*. The short forms are made of the first three letters (four letters in the case of *Sept.*) and a full stop, thus: Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. Write the names of the months in your book, and after each its short form. Also write a few dates correctly:

2 Sept., 1947, or 2nd Sept., 1947, 5 May, 1947, or 5th May, 1947.

#### PROJECTS TO DO WITH LETTER WRITING

Many projects arise through letter writing. Children become interested in the posting, collecting, sorting, and delivering of letters. A group or class project may develop. A large brown-paper book is made to hold all the children discover about *Our Postal Service*. The class works in groups or singly; for example: two or three children find out all about the pillar-box, the inside and outside. A simple project on the pillar-box will be found in *English and Your Daily Life*, Book IV (Longmans). This may give the children some ideas as to what to do and write. A drawing of the pillar-box and a written description are pasted in the class book. Other children write about the postman and his work, the mail van, the mail train, the parcel post, and so on.

The *Post Office* is a big undertaking, and needs many helpers to tell about the selling of stamps, weighing and stamping parcels, sending telegrams, etc. All sorts of interesting things can be pasted in the class book: a used envelope, postcard, telegram, stamps, and so on. Well-addressed envelopes and postcards should be chosen.

Another interesting project is *The Travels of a Letter*. Two or three children are responsible for each part of the journey. The following sections are suggested: (1) The writing of the letter and making it ready for its journey. (2) Posting the letter, either in a pillar-box or at the post office. (3) Collecting the letters. (4) The letters at the post office, stamped with date, etc., and sorted. (5) Mailbag and mail van. (6) In the train. (7) In a post office again. (8) Delivery of

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letters. Probably eight or nine sections are needed. Children sometimes get help from friendly postmen or postmasters at the post office.

### DIFFERENT WAYS OF SENDING MESSAGES

This is a very interesting and worthwhile project. The children collect all the different ways of sending messages: (1) letters, (2) postcards, (3) messengers, (4) telegrams, (5) telephone, (6) express messengers, (7) carrier pigeons, (8) wireless, (9) flags, and so on. This project links up with history. How were messages sent in olden days? The children will remember the roads of the Persians and the Persian horsemen (see Volume II, HISTORY). In this project, each child generally likes to make her own booklet, make drawings, collect pictures, etc.

### COLLECTING POSTMARKS

This is a very interesting project, and very useful from the point of view of geography, as it teaches children the counties and towns of England, Wales, etc. Let the children collect a number of used envelopes and study the postmarks on them. They look for perfect postmarks showing clearly the name of the place where the letter was posted, the date and the hour (see Fig. 39). The name at the top is the *town*, the name at the bottom the *county*. In the case of a village the nearest town is often stamped on the envelope, thus, the words *Ash, Canterbury, Kent*, around the rim of the postmark tells us that the letter was posted in the village of Ash, near Canterbury, in the county of Kent. Let them notice that the time and date are in the centre. The children will enjoy seeing what they can read on the postmarks, and find out.

Then they make a book or buy a

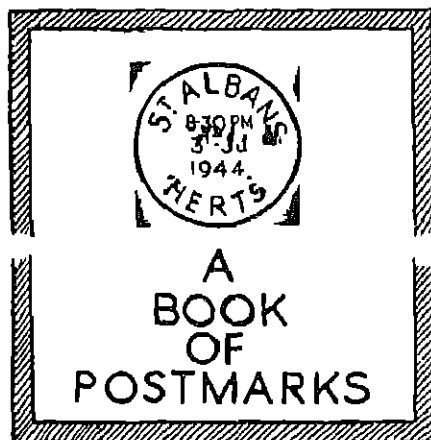


Fig. 39—COLLECTING POSTMARKS.

book in which to paste their perfect postmarks as they find them. Boys enjoy collecting postmarks as much as they enjoy collecting stamps. A good deal of exchanging can go on, and interesting "finds" are made. The postmarks look best if a square is drawn about each and then cut out. Encourage the children to arrange their postmarks in some sort of order; for example: (1) They can aim at finding *one* for every county in England and Wales. This will make a fine collection of some fifty-two. (2) A class book or album can be made, the name of a county written at the head of each page, and postmarks found to fill each page. Great towns like London ought really to have pages to themselves.

The children, in their own individual books, can also arrange their postmarks under the names of counties, but they can divide their pages into, say, four divisions crossways, and write the name of a county in each division. Each division will hold about four or five postmarks. The counties should be arranged in alphabetical order.

From this work the children learn a

great many abbreviations: *Cambs.* for Cambridgeshire, *Middx* for Middlesex, *Beds.* for Bedfordshire, etc.

Another collection children like to make is used modern stamps, beginning with  $\frac{1}{2}d.$ ,  $1d.$ ,  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ ,  $2d.$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ , and so on, as far as they can go.

### Picture Writing

Letter writing, as we have said, links up with the first ways of sending messages and the first way of writing. From their history lessons (see Volume II) the children will have learnt that long ago, when people could not write, they drew pictures, very simple pictures; they will have learnt also about the first pens, ink, and paper. Perhaps in connection with their history they are making booklets about the story of the alphabet and picture writing. In their English lessons, therefore, they will enjoy learning more about picture writing. The linking of the two subjects is very important.

Read to the children the lines that

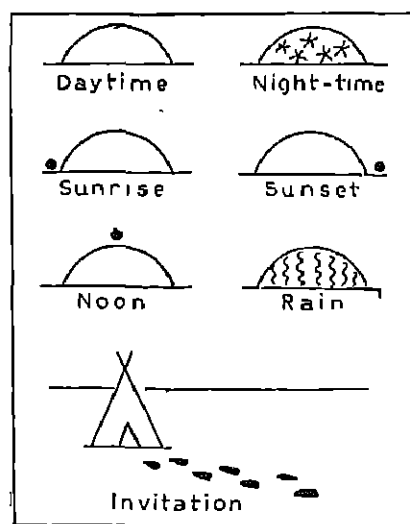


Fig 40.—HIAWATHA'S PICTURE WRITING.

tell how Hiawatha did his picture writing. Tell the children to listen carefully, because they are going to do the picture writing. The extract is also written on the board for them to see. Some words will need explaining, as *pouch*, *mystic* (mysterious), *figure* (a form, a shape, image, illustration).

*From his pouch he took his colours,  
Took his paints of different colours,  
On the smooth bark of the birch tree  
Painted many shapes and figures,  
Wonderful and mystic figures,  
And each figure had a meaning.*

*For the earth he drew a straight line,  
For the sky a bow above it;  
White the space between for daytime,  
Filled with little stars for night-time,  
On the left a point for sunrise,  
On the right a point for sunset,  
On the top a point for noontide;  
And for rain and cloudy weather  
Waving lines descending from it.  
Footprints pointing towards a wigwam  
Were a sign of invitation,  
Were a sign of guests assembling.*

When the poem has been read carefully by the children, and they are all sure that they understand what Hiawatha drew, some children come out to the blackboard. First they draw two vertical lines for the trunk of the birch tree. Then each child draws on the "trunk" one of the following pictures: the earth in daytime; the earth at night; sunrise; sunset; noon-tide; a rainy day; an invitation to the wigwam.

The class then decide if the picture writing is good, that is, if it is done in the way described in the poem. If any picture can be improved, they tell

## TITLES, LETTER WRITING, PROJECTS

exactly what should be done and why. Fig. 40 shows the correct drawings. The drawings of sunrise, noon, and sunset will be familiar to the children through their geography lessons (Volume II). This poem helps children to make mental pictures in their minds as they read. They must "see" what Hiawatha drew before they can draw. Point out to the children that the Red Indians noticed carefully the things around them, where the sun rose and set, the moon and stars, etc., so that their pictures though simple were correct. Notice the footprints pointing towards the wigwam.

Not all the Red Indians used the same picture writing. Fig. 41 shows some signs or pictures used by another tribe of Indians. Some more picture writing will be found in *Projects for the Junior School*, Book I (Harrap).

The children will all want to make booklets, in which to draw Red Indian picture writing, and any picture writing they have learnt: Egyptian, for

example. They can make pretty designs for the covers of their books from the Red Indian signs they have learnt, as in Fig. 42.

Each child will fill his book up in his own way. Some may be able to tell stories with Indian pictures. Here are two they can try.

(1) Swift Foot and Brave Eagle went on a buffalo hunt. They were gone three suns. They shot a buffalo with their arrows. An enemy crossed their path.

(2) Brave Wolf was out in a storm. There were many clouds and much falling rain. Brave Wolf hurried home to his tent, where he lit a good fire.

Some children may like to invent picture writing. Often suggestions will help them to do really worthwhile work. They can use picture writing to tell what is done on each day of the week; for example: Sunday, going to church; Monday, washing, etc. They can tell in pictures all they did on one particular day. A very valuable exer-

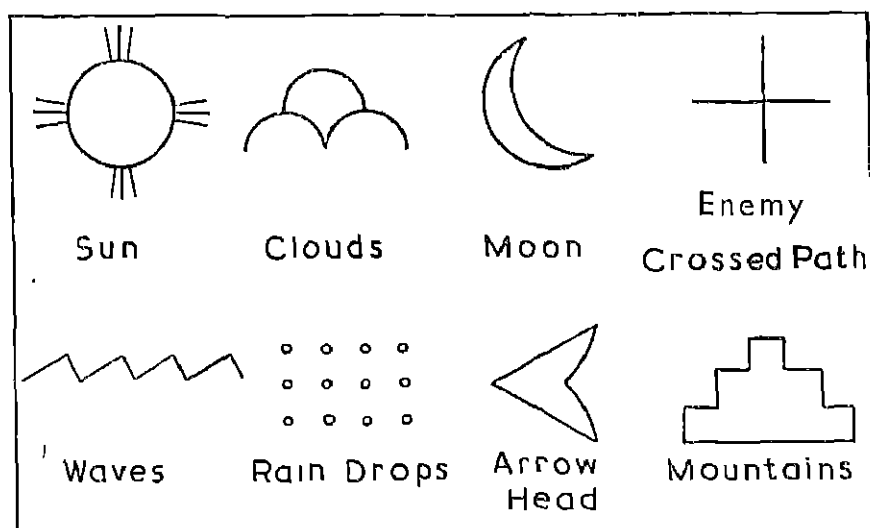


Fig. 41.—MORI RED INDIAN PICTURE WRITING.

cise is to let the children make a booklet of twelve pages, each page telling in pictures all about the month. The children must think carefully, and remember what they have learnt in the nature-study lessons. For some months it is easier to find pictures than for others. Remind the children that they are doing picture writing, so they must keep their pictures simple and not too large. With small, simple pictures more things can be told. Stick figures are useful. The children can tell the story of the seasons in the same way.

### Word Pictures

From talks about picture writing, the children can be led to think about word pictures, or pictures in words. Pictures are generally easier to understand than words, but words also make pictures. Give the children some examples of *word pictures*, and let them draw the pictures the words make them see; for example, say to them:

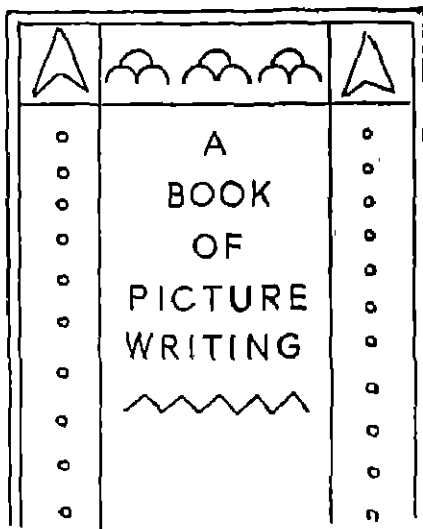


Fig. 42—COVER DESIGN FROM RED INDIAN SYMBOLS.

The poet who wrote the following lines had a picture in his mind. Listen carefully to the words, and draw the picture if you can see it. Use coloured crayons if you like:

*The earth was green, the sky was blue;  
I saw and heard one sunny morn,  
A skylark hung between the two,  
A singing speck above the corn.*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

Is "a singing speck" a good name for a bird singing high in the air?

Here is another word picture. This time a picture of winter days. What do you see as you hear or read these words?

*Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,  
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;  
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,  
A blood-red orange, sets again.*

*Black are my steps on silver sod;  
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;  
And tree and house, and hill and lake,  
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.*

R. L. STEVENSON.

Can you see a picture of a "winty sun"? What does "silver sod" mean? Have you even seen your breath? This is a picture in white, grey, black and orange. What is white in the picture? grey? black? orange? Draw the picture you see.

Children get good results if they are given grey paper, and black, white, and orange crayons or paints.

Let the children look through their poetry books or reading books for word pictures, and copy those they find into books of their own, with a suitable picture pasted on the cover. This means careful and thoughtful reading



It is also a good exercise in transcription, spelling, and writing. A certain amount of practice in handwriting is essential to prevent written work from degenerating. Children will be more likely to write neatly and attractively when they know that their work is not a mere exercise, but is the making of a little book which they will take away with them as a permanent possession. (This remark applies to all the many booklets suggested in these volumes.)

Underneath some of the extracts they may like to draw and paint little pictures. The copying is never tedious because the children choose their own extracts and they are not long.

## Suggestions for Other Activities

### MAKING A "CINEMA STORY-BOOK" (Fig. 43)

The children make a panorama book, as in Fig. 37. They draw a picture of a cinema on the cover, with "coloured lights" or any suitable decoration. The children plan four or more pictures that tell a story. Under each picture they write sentences that make the story clear and interesting. They draw their pictures in their books, or draw them on paper and paste them in their books, one on each page, leaving room under each picture for writing. They can imagine that they are writing a film about their dog or some pet, or their pictures can show a day in the life of some creature or human being. The "Story of My Life" told by a Cat, or a Red Indian, or a Gipsy, makes good scenes. Drawings of a Red Indian tent or a caravan on wheels are not too difficult. Some children may like to make film pictures for well-known stories, such as: "The Three Bears," "Cinder-

ella," "The Sleeping Beauty," etc. Children will find further suggestions in *English of Your Daily Life*, Book IV, Chapter 25, "At the Cinema" (Longmans). They will like the suggested pictures for a cowboy story.

Figs. 44 and 45 show a good way to fold the paper to make a "film" for "The Life-story of a Frog." A piece of paper 5 in. by 7½ in. is folded in four, crossways, as in Fig. 44, to make a small "cinema booklet." It is divided in half lengthwise, so that one half can be kept for the pictures and one half for the writing, as in Fig. 45. (In the booklet shown in Fig. 43, the writing comes under each picture.)

Before putting the picture story of the frog in their books, the children should first plan it out roughly in double columns, putting a few quick sketches in one column and a few notes in the other. This will help them to decide how many pictures they want, and what pictures. If their book will hold only four pictures, they must choose the best four to tell the story. The little rough sketches help the children "to see" the story in their minds.



Fig. 43.—BOOKLET FOR PICTURE STORIES

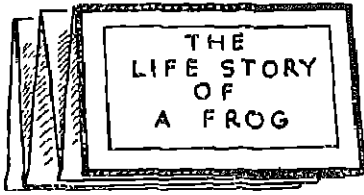


Fig 44.—BOOKLET FOR "FILM" LIFE-STORY.

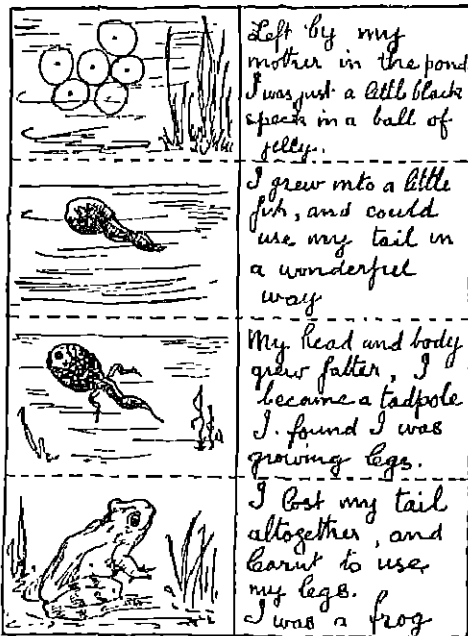


Fig 45.—INSIDE PAGES OF "FILM" LIFE-STORY

This narrative type of composition can be used to train children in the necessary ideas of sequence and logical progression. The history stories, and the booklets suggested for children's work (see Volume II) are useful for the same purpose.

It is a good plan to suggest "cinema" or "picture" stories about subjects upon which actual lessons have already been given some time in the past. There is often suitable material among these lessons—history, geography, or nature study. Thus a class which, early

in the year, had been studying the various features of pond life, should, much later in the year, be able to make interesting "film stories" on the life of the frog, while at the same time they are doing valuable revision. In the same way, after learning about the Norman Conquest they can do a film story of the Conquest. Their cinema books will vary in size, according to the subject treated. Whatever story is taken, its various stages can readily be compared to a series of cuttings from a cinematograph film, as suggested. This arouses greater interest than if they have merely to write a story.

#### MAKING PICTURE CHARTS AND BOOKLETS ABOUT INVENTIONS

The children plan a picture chart to show some of the new things which men have learnt to make and use. In newspapers and magazines they will find among the advertisements pictures of these things: motor-cars, sewing machines, typewriters, vacuum-cleaners, refrigerators, wireless sets, telephones, electric torches, etc. A large sheet or strip of brown paper, or a sheet of card-board, is pinned up, on which to mount the pictures. Under each picture is the name of the thing and one sentence. It is interesting to watch the chart growing. Fig. 46 shows one way of arranging the chart. The children try to make the chart look as attractive as possible. This is a good project for the nine- and ten-year-olds.

Many children will want to make booklets for themselves in which to mount pictures and write sentences. If the children can find no pictures, and the thing is too difficult to draw, they print the name. Some children working out this project thought of a new

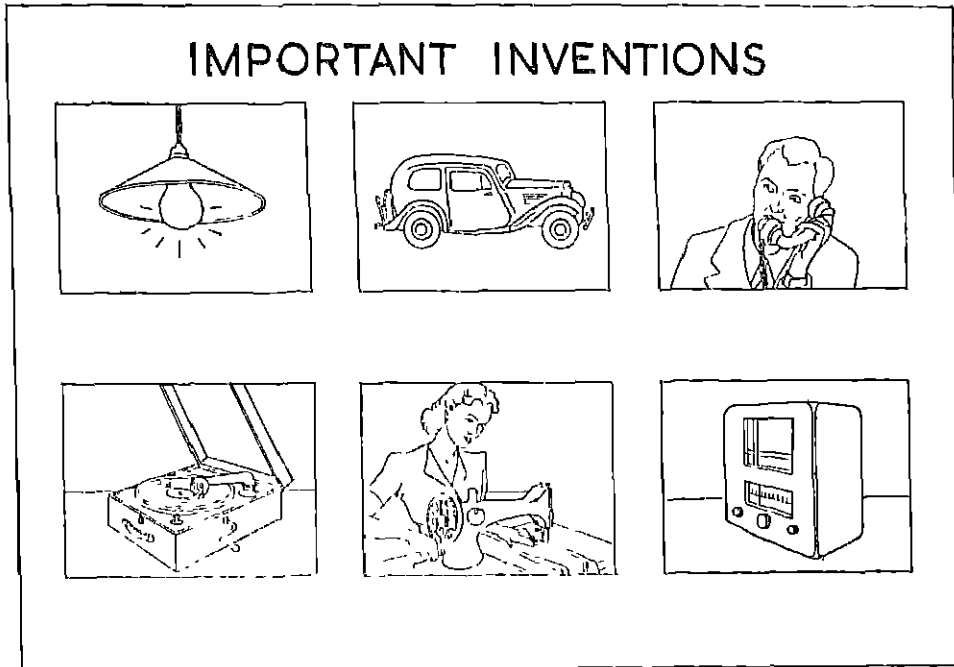


Fig. 46—PICTURE CHART FOR MODERN INVENTIONS.

plan for a booklet. They put pictures of old things by the side of new—a pinewood torch by the side of an electric torch; a flint knife by the side of a modern knife, and so on. They called their booklets, "Things Old and New." These booklets link history and English. Fig. 47 shows a page from one. (See Volume II, HISTORY.)

Through these projects the children learn how to spell many difficult words, as *refrigerator*, because they not only write them, but see them written under a picture, where they can read them as often as they like. Children will find help in this project, and other similar projects, in *English of Your Daily Life*, Book III, Chapter 26, "Things Old and New," and Book IV, Chapter 16, "Wonders of Today" (Longmans).

#### A BOOKLET OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

On the cover a big question mark is drawn in the middle, and a pattern made of little question marks forms a border. These borders can be made to look very effective. The children then think of good questions to put in their books. They can have questions about fables, stories, poems, geography, history, nature study, etc. Encourage them to have one page of questions for each subject. After each question they write the answer. They will probably take some time to fill up these booklets, but if small booklets, 5 in. by 7½ in., are made, they are not tedious to fill. Each page holds only a few questions on each subject. This is a good exercise in spelling, and in writing questions.

KEEPING A DIARY FOR A WEEK OR A  
FORTNIGHT

This gives practice in writing dates. Children of the Primary School age will not be interested in keeping a diary longer than a week or a fortnight. Remind the children to try to tell every day something interesting they saw out of doors—flowers, trees, birds, clouds, rain, etc. Besides telling about things they saw, they must write about things they did. Put a specimen entry on the board to show them how to put the date first, and use short forms for the name of the month, as in writing letters, thus:

"Sun. 5th Jan., 1947.

"There was frost on my window pane this morning. It made many pat-

terns like leaves or waves. I saw a robin. His red breast looked cheerful because the sky was a dull grey."

On a day arranged all the diaries are brought to school, and each child reads an entry from his diary. The rest listen carefully to see if the entries are good, and which entries are due to sharp eyes.

The diaries are a great help to nature study. They also mean a little careful writing by the children every day.

A TRAVEL BOOKLET

Children enjoy collecting all the different ways of travelling. They make drawings and find pictures. Pictures of motor-cars, trains, ships, and aeroplanes are easy to find. The children will get many ideas from their

geography lessons—sledges in the land of snow, the birch-bark canoes of the Red Indians, elephants in India, camels in the desert, etc. Around them, too, they will see various ways of travelling or carrying goods, and thus are encouraged to keep their eyes open: horse and cart, bicycle, motor-bicycle, tram, trolley-bus, motor-bus, perambulator, scooter(1), ambulance, etc. Many thoughtful children will begin their books with the first way of travelling—walking.

They look through books at home and in the library, where they



Fig. 47.—BOOKLET LINKING ENGLISH AND HISTORY.

will be able to make several finds, such as *skis, mules on the mountains, rickshas, llamas* in Peru, etc.

It is best for the children to paste only two pictures or drawings on each page, and leave a space under each for a title, and a few sentences telling about the way of travelling. This is a combined drawing, handwork, geography, and English project.

This travel project is so interesting that the children often want to work together and make a large class travel book. In working together they get more pictures in *one* book, instead of having them scattered in many books. The pages can be made separately, then fastened together, and put in a decorated cover in the art lesson.

Children like learning this rhyme, and copying it on the first page of their booklets:

## WAYS OF TRAVELLING

*Rickshas out in China,  
Llamas in Peru,  
Great camels in the desert  
That lies by Timbuktu.  
Mules in the mountains  
And horses on the plain,  
Motor-cars in Paris,  
And ox-carts down in Spain.  
Buses in the cities,  
Liners on the sea,  
Tractors through the wheatlands  
That stretch on endlessly.  
Motors on the highways  
Of every land and clime,  
And folk afoot in sleepy towns  
Where ancient church bells chime,  
Aeroplanes of silver  
Up where clouds have birth—  
Thus do people travel  
Over all the earth.*

—From *English of Your Daily Life*,  
Book IV (Longmans).

## CHAPTER TEN

# LITERATURE

SO far we have considered reading mainly from the point of view of reading for information. Obviously, all that the child reads in the Primary School will not be of the same literary value. A great many stories, rhymes, and poems will be read by the children for practice in reading, to help them to get over the mechanical difficulty of reading. To identify the reading lessons of the younger children with their literature lessons is to keep them often at things much too immature, and to retard their mental and artistic progress. It is beyond question that a child's listening vocabulary is always far in advance of his reading vocabulary. The work in literature, then, must be chiefly *oral* work; it must not be bound by the printed page.

The value of the true literature lesson to the children is not in gaining so much information or in mental exercises, but in the living experience, in living to the fullest extent of their powers through experiences that are selected, shaped, and presented in as *perfect* a form as possible. The children must feel with the characters they read about, they must recreate within themselves the experiences through which these characters pass. This will be touched on again later when dealing with actual stories.

It need not concern the teacher that much of the material that the children read is of necessity not literature,

though good enough in its way. It would, perhaps, be a mistake for a child to live in an "atmosphere of literature"; indeed, for some children there is the danger of over-stimulation. Moreover, children must realize that reading is a key not only to literature, but to science, to nature study, to handwork, etc. Any syllabus of *reading* that contains nothing but literature (even if such a scheme were possible) is a mistake.

The teaching of literature in the Primary School consists in giving the children each term a *few* stories and poems chosen aright and taught aright, so that the children do not miss the perfect *structure* of the story, the *music*, or the *emotion*. These are to be lingered over and assimilated. They will form a basis for future work. Too many stories cannot be assimilated in the same way. One story of real literary value a week, or even a fortnight, may, in some cases, be enough. It must be chosen for its perfection, and be sound in structure and stand the test of criticism. We want the children themselves gradually to become critical in the matter of literature, and we want some stories, out of all the many they read or hear in the Primary School, to stand out in their minds as models of good art, to be beautiful landmarks in the pleasant, homely land of reading. The literature lesson, as we have said before, must be an oral lesson for the children in the Primary School, because they

## L I T E R A T U R E

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can understand better what they hear than what they read. It cannot be too strongly stated that as far as possible everything read *by the teacher* to the children should be of literary value; the more trivial stories they can read for themselves.

In the syllabus outlined below different types of story are given. It is important that children should realize the variety of good things to be found in a study of literature.

The *Introduction to Literature* is through nursery rhymes and fairy-tales. We will first consider folk-tales or fairy-tales.

### Folk-tales or Fairy-tales

Not all fairy-tales are, of course, literature, certainly not all modern ones. The fairy-tales that can claim to be literature are the old folk-tales that have stood the test of time. It is their simplicity, sincerity, and earnestness that give them the childlike quality that makes them so fitting for children.

Folk-tales introduce the child not only to the world of imaginary beings—the fairies, the fairy godmothers and wise women, the elves of the trees, the dwarfs of the ground, the trolls of the rocks and hills, and the giants and witches, *but* to the great company of toilers in every occupation of life. In what other stories will the child meet the shoemaker, the woodcutter, the miller, the weaver, the spinner, the hunter, the poor traveller, the prince and princess, and a host of others? It is a simple world, where the child can come close to the realities of life and see how picturesque and interesting they are.

The kings and princes, too, are like those in the *Odyssey*, men who often engage in homely occupations, and are

on happy equality with swineherds and tailors. In these folk-tales the world of real people and occupations forms an effective background to the supernatural and marvellous.

The main sources for some of the best folk-tales are: Grimm's *Tales*, Perrault's *Mother Goose* tales, Jacobs' *English Tales*, Dasent's *Popular Tales from the Norse*, and the *Arabian Nights*, with a few interlopers like the "The Three Bears" (by Robert Southey) and the "Tin Soldier," and one or two others from Hans Andersen.

In planning a year's work only a certain number of stories should be selected. No child should be told too many. Possibly all children have too many fairy-stories told or read to them, and suffer from the confusing "too much."

There are several classes of folk-tales; for example: (a) Cumulative Tales, (b) Romantic Tales; (c) Realistic Tales. Some should be chosen from each of these classes, so that the children have variety.

### CUMULATIVE TALES

These are the simplest tales, in which incident is interlocked with incident. Some are tales of simple repetition, and some have more plot. Many of these, being the simplest adjustment of incident to incident, are ideal for the Infant School, such as: "The Old Woman Who Found Sixpence," "The Little Red Hen," "The Three Little Pigs," "The Three Bears," "Johnny Cake," and "The Gingerbread Man." Others, more complex, will delight children of seven and eight; for example: "Henny-Penny," "The Three Billy-Goats Gruff" (Norwegian), "Munachar and Manachar" (Irish tale), "Titty-Mouse and Tatty-Mouse."

The merely haphazard run of incident, as in "The House that Jack Built," may amuse and interest the children, but it gives them less training in artistic and literary form. The incidents are linked together in an accumulative fashion, but they stop short with no satisfying end. On the other hand, "The Old Woman Who Found Sixpence" is perfect in structure. The incidents are arranged in a good pattern and lead to a satisfying end. One great source of pleasure in this tale is that each object whose aid is sought by the Old Woman is asked to do the thing that it is natural for him to do—the Dog to bite, the Stick to beat, and so on. Because, too, each successive object has power to master the preceding one—the Stick to beat the Dog, the Water to quench the Fire—we get the intimate connection of cause and effect which helps the development of the child's reason and memory. He may remember the order of the events; but if he forgets, he can remake the tale by reasoning out the connection between the successive things whose aid was asked. It is only through association that the memory is exercised.

Older children will benefit from hearing the story of "The Three Billy-Goats Gruff," because the structure is so good. It will be found in an almost perfect literary form in Dasent's *Tales from the Norse*. The orderly structure of the story, and some of the good points of the story, should be pointed out to older children; for example, the simple precision of the first paragraph:

"Once on a time there were three Billy-Goats, who were to go up to the hill-side to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was Gruff."

The unity of the tale is good. All the

happenings take place on a bridge which went "trip, trap!" as a goat crossed it on his way up the hill-side. The unity is emphasized by the repetition in the tale, as the three Billy-Goats successively cross the bridge and reply to the Troll. The climax is when the big Billy-Goat Gruff tramps across. The children's attention can be drawn to the paragraphs (see Chapter II). Each paragraph ends in arresting words.

Here is the second paragraph:

"On the way up was a bridge over a burn they had to cross; and under the bridge lived a great ugly Troll, with eyes as big as saucers, and a nose as long as a poker."

Acting, retelling, or illustrating the story will help to drive home its orderly structure. Its example may help to check rambling stories. Orderly structure is "good composition." Nothing in literature, perhaps, has a higher educational value than this sense of orderly structure.

The best versions of "Henny-Penny," "The Old Woman and Her Pig," "Titty-Mouse and Tatty-Mouse" will be found in *English Tales*, by Joseph Jacobs. "Titty-Mouse and Tatty-Mouse" pleases because of its liveliness and the catastrophe at the end, which delights a child as much as the tumble of his big pile of bricks. There are many variants of this tale. It is Grimm's "The Spider and the Flea," and the Norse "The Cock Who Fell into the Brewing Vat."

In the story of "The Spider and the Flea," the use of the letter *e* should be pointed out to the child. They can follow the letter *e* by sound, and, if passages are written on the board, by eye.

The children will find *e* in *Flea*, *beer*, *scream*, *creak*, *weeps*, *sweep*, *reason*,



*heap, tree, leaves, streamlet.* The repetition of one sound puts music into the story, and unity. In the next part of the story there is a variety of sounds of o, as, *thereupon, door, broom, stool, corner.* Other effective uses of sound can be found. The employment of concrete language, words that present images, is both agreeable to children and of value from the point of view of reading and composition. Teachers who advocate the "Sentence Method" of teaching often forget that a *word* is of more value than a sentence; indeed, it is a sentence if it calls up an image clear in outline.

In "Titty-Mouse and Tatty-Mouse," again, the sounds of particular letters add to the harmony of the whole.

A good version of "Munachar and Manachar" will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book II, "Happy Hours" (Oxford University Press). Children enjoy this story because of the unexpected ending and the beauty of the setting. More will be said about the setting of stories later.

The Spanish story, "Little Half-Chick," is another cumulative tale similar to "Henny-Penny." It is worthy of study in any class. The interest centres in the disobedient but energetic hero, who is very appealing as well as amusing. The beauty lies in the settings of the different adventures. The end delights children, especially if they have seen and know a weather-vane. For this story see *The Romance of Reading*, Book II (O.U.P.).

## ROMANTIC FAIRY-TALES

These offer a pleasing contrast to the accumulative stories, which are *realistic*. The romantic tale reflects emotion, and it contains adventure and the pic-

turesque. They are not nearly so simple as the cumulative stories.

"Biar Rose," or "The Sleeping Beauty" (Grimm's version) should be read to the children as an example of a story almost perfect in structure. There is nothing chaotic about it. It gathers its incidents into movements that correspond to the five acts of a play. If the children are allowed to act the story, the divisions become clearer as they organize it into scenes. The dramatization of this story is dealt with fully in Section III, which covers all forms of dramatic work.

"Snow White and Rose Red" (Grimm) blends the romantic and the realistic. It has a good, interesting plot, with something happening all the time. The climax is very distinctly marked, everything leading up to the meeting of the Bear and the Dwarf in the forest. The setting of the story is unusually attractive—the interior of the cottage, the wood, the lake, the hill-side, and above all the two symbolic rose-trees.

The setting of a story is often more important than the children realize. It is the source of a variety of feelings. It gives, also, the poetic or artistic touch to a story; for example, in "Snow White and Rose Red" the scene changes from the peaceful happy interior of the cottage to the snow-storm from which the Bear emerges. It is worth while pointing out the setting to older children. Let them notice that in the old fairy-tales the setting is often given in *a word or two*, which acts as magic to open one's eyes. There are no elaborate descriptions.

In Section III, dealing with dramatic work, there are suggestions for stage settings that help children to understand the settings of the story.

The story of Snow White and Rose Red presents distinct episodes: the home life of the children in the cottage, their happy days in the woods, their adventures with the Bear and the Dwarf, the meeting of the Bear and the Dwarf. The conclusion follows quickly on the climax. The happy marriage brings the story to a close, and the last picture is the palace home guarded by two rose-trees. The structure of the story can be incidentally pointed out to the children when they act it, or retell it in parts or episodes, or draw pictures for it.

"Cinderella," or "*The Little Glass Slipper*"—Perrault's version of this story is best, because it is told with no irrelevant details. Grimm's is not so good in structure.

"Cinderella" is a good type of the old romantic tale. It has a never-ending attraction for children. The setting is interesting—first the homely kitchen scene and then the palace. The children will enjoy comparing this story with the Egyptian version of Cinderella that they will hear in the history lesson (see Volume II). "Cinderella" is a popular story all over the world, for there are over three hundred variants of it.

"Little Two-Eyes" is another attractive fairy-tale with a beautiful setting. It contains two magic rhymes. The fairy meals in the field delight children. The magic tree, with its silver leaves and golden fruit, the knight and his fine steed, and the climax of the tale when the golden apple rolls from under the casks—all are of great interest. It can be dramatized as two complete episodes: (1) The Goat Episode, or the Fairy Housekeeping. (2) The Magic Tree. Each episode has three scenes. This is one of Grimm's stories.

"Madame Holle," or "*Gold Mary and Tar Mary*" (Grimm). This story is good in structure and has a beautiful setting. There are, too, many appropriate autumn touches. In the beautiful field the apples are ripe and full of seeds; the golden corn has been cut down, ground into flour, and baked into bread, and the approach of winter is suggested by the feathers which fly as snowflakes from Madame Holle's bed.

In the story we have the contrast between the good, unselfish girl and the idle, selfish girl. The justice that overtakes the selfish girl gives unfailing satisfaction to the children. This is one of the easiest and most appreciated stories to take with children. The opening of the story, the good girl spinning, is homely and familiar. A suitable version of this story, based on Grimm's, will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book I, "Merry Moments" (O.U.P.). Madame Holle in Grimm's version is Mother Hulda, who sends the snow, in the above reader. Children like this name better as they understand it better.

"The Story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" is one of the romantic fairy-tales which has been rewritten and staged as a play for children. It is so well known that nothing need be said about it here.

*The Arabian Nights*—These stories are rather different from the romantic stories we have been considering, and less simple, but they satisfy the child's craving for sense impressions—good things to eat, beautiful flowers, the beauties of sight, colour, and sound, of odour and of taste. This appeal to the senses is one of the chief charms of the *Arabian Nights*. Intelligent children of seven and eight can be introduced to

ese stories. Begin with "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp," "The Fisherman and the Genii" for the seven- and eight-year-olds. The eight- and nine-year-olds will appreciate "Sindbad the Sailor." As they are long stories of many episodes, only a few can be taken.

#### UMOROUS REALISTIC FAIRY-TALES

The humorous is one of the most pleasing to the little child. Realistic tales deal with the simple and the ordinary. They are really domestic tales. The comic element often appears among them, as if humour were more fresh when related to ordinary happenings.

Many of the cumulative stories are humorous domestic tales. The humorous element for children appears in the *repetition* of phrases such as we find in "Three Bears," "Three Pigs," and "Three Billy-Goats"; and in the *element of surprise* when Johnny Cake is eaten by the Fox, and when Little Iken eats the bread, and so on.

"The Musicians of Bremen" (Grimm) is an example of a fine, realistic short tale, and a good type of humorous tale. It possesses suspense, and is a series of surprises with one grand surprise at the robber's feast as its climax. The courage and leadership of the old donkey pleases the children, and the message of the tale, "that there ought to be room for the aged and those worn out with work," appeals to their good sense. Some children may see another message—"the guilty flee when no man pursueth!" The children love the variety of noises furnished by the different characters, especially the grand chorus of music which leaves no doubt as to the climax.

The sentences and paragraphs have

arresting words, as: "Not long after they saw a cat sitting in the road with a face as dismal as three days of rainy weather."

It is surprising how much of interest there is in this simple tale, and interest quickens when the cock from the tree-top sees in the distance a tiny spark burning. No child should ever miss this story, so perfect in form, and with all the elements of true humour.

The example of co-operation, where all had a unity of purpose, is seen in several other similar stories, as: "Jack and His Comrades" (Jacobs' *Celtic Tales*), "How Jack Sought His Fortune" (*English Fairy Tales*, Joseph Jacobs).

"The Sheep and the Pig" (a Norse tale in Dasent's *Tales from the Field*) is a delightfully humorous story, and similar to "The Musicians of Bremen," because a Sheep and a Pig start out to find a home, to live together. They meet a Hare who, when asked what he could do to build a house, "scratched his leg with his left hind foot for a minute and said, 'I can gnaw pegs with my sharp teeth and I can put them in with my paws.'" The grey Goose undertook to pull moss and stuff it in cracks, and a Cock promised to crow early and awaken them. So they all built a house and lived in it happily. The building or finding of a house always interests children.

"The Elves and the Shoemaker" is another perfect little story. The homely setting—the poor room with its simple bed and table—becomes transformed by the dream-like happenings. The commonplace peasants are interesting because of their kindness to the Elves; and the Elves are human in their joy at receiving gifts. Setting, characters, and

plot make a perfect whole. In this story we get the rhythm of shoemaking, the little Elves stitch, rap, and tap, stitch, rap, and tap.

Other comic realistic tales are "Hans in Luck" (Grimm), "Clever Elsa" (Grimm), and "Lazy Jack" (*English Fairy Tales*, by Joseph Jacobs). These are all comic stories based on the blunders, misadventures, and often the undeserved good luck of fools. "Hans in Luck," a perfect realistic tale, and "Clever Elsa" are suitable for older children. "Lazy Jack" is the best story for the younger children. Apart from the fact that children enjoy it, it impresses the truth that even a child must reason, and judge, and use his own common sense. Jack in the end wins good fortune by making royalty laugh.

Grimm's "Dummling and his Golden Goose" is another realistic story with the same *motif* of a humble individual causing nobility to laugh. Suggestions for miming this story are given in Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work. A dramatized version will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book I, "Merry Moments" (O.U.P.).

Andersen's "Tin Soldier" is a realistic tale which gives an adventure that might happen to a real tin soldier.

### Animal Stories or Beast Tales

Many fascinating animal stories are to be found among the folk-tales or fairy-tales. These have already been dealt with.

Stories of animals are perhaps the oldest stories, dating back to some successful primitive hunt, or to primitive man's experience with animals when he looked up to them as superior to himself in strength, keen scent, swiftness,

vision, and cunning (see History, Volume II). From these early stories, told around the cave fire, the fable resulted. From the literary point of view, the fables—Æsop's as well as many of La Fontaine's—are the best of the animal stories. In the Primary School a great many of the simple old fables may be taught, as: "The Crow and the Pitcher," "The Hare and the Tortoise," "The Town Mouse and the Field Mouse," "The Fox and the Crow," etc. A good deal about the use of the fable has been said in the various chapters on the teaching of English, and in Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work.

The old story of "Reynard the Fox" is a kind of beast epic. Reynard the Fox is a rascal who always triumphs, so one questions the moral effect of reading too many of these stories! However, the book can be kept lying by one, and an episode read now and then throughout the year.

Br'er Rabbit, in *Uncle Remus*, always delights children. The tales collected in this book by Joel Chandler Harris form a pleasing and usable beast epic. Like the Reynard tales, these are best inserted here and there throughout the year, and not read in a mass. "Brother Rabbit Takes Some Exercise," a tale from *Nights with Uncle Remus*, is very similar to "Henny-Penny," and could be read at the same time. Some good Br'er Rabbit stories will be found in *The Children's Uncle Remus* (Harrap). These might be read by the children themselves.

*Black Beauty*, an early modern animal tale, is suitable for the school library. There will not be time for it in the literature lessons. In this story, and similar early modern stories, the psychology of the animals is human.

In Kipling's tales we have a later evolution of the animal tale. In the *Just-So Stories*, Kipling has given us the animal *pourquoi* tale with a foundation of scientific truth. They are perfect stories for children, perfect in structure, humour, unity, music, thrill, and climax. The setting of the titles is given in short, vivid expressions. "The Elephant's Child," to take one story, stands all the tests that can be applied to a child's fairy-tale.

Again, *The Jungle Books* are unique in the masterly structure of their stories. They can be read to the eight- and nine-year-olds for the story, to the eleven- and twelve-year-olds for the style, while stories like "Toomai of the Elephants" can be read with advantage in the Secondary Schools. Every reading of *The Jungle Book* will teach literature, because it gives the child a standard. The eight- and nine-year-olds will enjoy "Toomai of the Elephants" and "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi." Whatever stories have to be left out, the literature syllabus must contain some from the *Just-So Stories* and *The Jungle Book*.

### Hero Tales. Epics and Sagas

In the days before books, when a tale was a tale, songs and stories grew up around a brave man. He was given difficulties to overcome, and fresh adventures. Minstrels with new songs to sing about him were gladly welcomed in hall and castle. Then, as time went on, a master singer or romancer came along who gathered together all the scattered songs and tales and made them into one continuous story, a *long poem* called an *epic*. Some of these cycles of hero tales or epics are suitable for the Primary School. In their history lessons

(Volume II) the children will have learnt about Homer, who in the ninth century before Christ gathered together all the beautiful old songs and stories of the Greeks into two of the greatest poems or epics in the world—the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The five most famous cycles of hero tales, from the point of view of literature, are: (1) The *Iliad*. (2) The *Odyssey*. (3) *Legends of Robin Hood*. (4) *King Arthur*. (5) *Siegfried*. Other famous hero tales are: (1) *The Story of Beowulf*. (2) *Heroes of Asgard*, the sagas of the North, prose tales of Odin, Thor, Balder, etc. (3) *The Song of Roland*. (4) *The Cid*, a Spanish hero tale.

It is perhaps a big step for the children from the homely atmosphere of fairy-tales and folk-tales to the wider, bolder, and in many ways more "grown-up" world of the epic.

Some teachers may be able to make one of the cycles the centre of interest of the literature lesson for a year, grouping other short stories and poems around it—treating it in somewhat the way of a project; other teachers may prefer to take a few suitable stories from various epics or sagas, and tell two or three each year. Much depends on the age and ability of the children. But some hero stories must be taken, so that the children in the Primary Schools have as wide an experience of literature as possible.

Some notes on the hero tales with regard to their suitability for the Primary School may be useful to teachers in drawing up a syllabus. It is useful, also, to know which are most available. In the literature lesson the stories read or told must, as far as possible, be models of structure and language.

(1) *The Iliad*, on the whole, is too difficult for the Primary School. The wealth of incidents obscure the main actions to the child, who needs a more compact and complete plot. But as in the history lessons the children will learn about the Greek war with Troy (see Volume II), and the story of the Wooden Horse, they will enjoy one story at least from the *Iliad*. The difficulty about choosing one story is that although we can tell it, we cannot show the beauty of the literary form. The best tale, therefore, to take is the tale of Hector's meeting with his wife Andromache and their baby on the walls of Troy. Even a translation cannot mar its beauty; for it is one of the most moving passages in Homer. The story is given on pages 128-30.

(2) *The Odyssey*, on the other hand, is full of delight to the child, and the adventures are well linked together by the central figure. All the details are pleasing, and adapted to the interests of the child. If possible it should be taken with the nine- and ten-year-olds. Fortunately, too, there is a good translation of real literary value available, namely *Adventures of Odysseus*, in the "King's Treasury" series (Dent). Some of this can be read each week to the children and enjoyed. The response they make to it will be in the form of dramatization or handwork or art. Children conducted through the *Odyssey* often become interested in pottery, weaving, and even metalwork.

It is a wise rule that all stories read to the children by the teacher should be of literary value; only in this way can we improve their taste. Most of what the children read for themselves, as we have said before, must of necessity be ordinary prose.

(3) *Legends of Robin Hood*.—These stories can be told partly from the ballads. They give the children pictures of old English woodlands, and life in Sherwood Forest in the days of King John, and form a good link with history. A typical story of Robin Hood will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book III, "Pleasant Paths" (O.U.P.). Children of nine and ten will enjoy the story, and of course older children. When they learn about Robin Hood, Shakespeare's "Under the Greenwood Tree" and Alfred Noyes' poem "Sherwood" should be read to them.

(4) *Legends of King Arthur*.—The cycle of stories of King Arthur contains a good deal that is unsuitable for Junior children. They are not interested in the "love affairs" of knights and maidens, nor do we want to thrust this interest upon them too soon. The lovely legend of the Holy Grail is also too difficult for them to handle. But as they will meet with King Arthur's name in the history lessons, and when they visit or read about Cornwall, they should know one or two stories about him; for example, "How Arthur Drew the Sword from the Stone," and "How Arthur Got the Sword Excalibur." (See the play about King Arthur at the end of this section.)

(5) *The Siegfried Legend*.—In the huge collection of sagas, romances, and operas that now go to make up the legend, there is a great deal that is not suited to Junior children, for much the same reasons that the Arthur cycle is not suited. But for the teacher who wants to give her children as wide an experience of literature as possible, there are three stories that children enjoy: (1) "How Siegfried Got the Sword from Mimi." (2) "Siegfried and the Dragon."

(3) "How Siegfried Rescued Brunhild." The triumph of Siegfried, when he burst through the magic flames, thrills them. The tragic Siegfried must be left for later days. A simple version of "The Story of Siegfried" is published by Harrap in their *All Time Tales*.

With regard to the other hero tales, *The Story of Beowulf* will be enjoyed by children who are learning about the coming of the Anglo-Saxons. It helps to give them a picture of the original homes of the English on the Continent, their weapons, tools, clothing, and long-boats. The story of Beowulf will be found in *Northland Heroes*, by Florence Holbrook (Harrap).

The Sagas of the North, the stories of Balder, Odin, Thor, and the other gods and goddesses of the North, are beautifully told in *Heroes of Asgard*, by A. E. Keary. These stories again fit in well with the history lessons. Children are especially interested in learning about the gods and goddesses after whom the days of the week are called.

A story from *The Song of Roland* makes a pleasant change from tales of gods and goddesses. It gives children a glimpse of the days of Charlemagne. The story of Roland and Oliver, knights of Charlemagne, will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book III, "Pleasant Pathways" (O.U.P.).

Stories of the Cid link up with History, with the Moors (Arabs) of Spain and the Crusades, for he lived in the eleventh century. The real name of the famous Spanish warrior was Roderigo Diaz, but his Moorish vassals called him *Sid-i* (My Lord), which the Spaniards translated as *Mio Cid*. Minstrels in Spain sang stories about his wonderful deeds as minstrels in France sang about Charlemagne. (See Volume

II, HISTORY). For stories about the Cid see Southey's *Chronicles of the Cid*. Children enjoy the stories because of the Cid's famous horse Baveca. Some of the old poems about the Cid are almost as fine as some passages from Homer.

"The Story of Dick Whittington and His Cat."—This must be mentioned here, although it is hardly a hero tale compared with some of the others. It is a delightful story, and is a link with history. It gives a picture of life in the fourteenth century. The story will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book I, "Merry Moments" (O.U.P.).

### Proverbs

Proverbs may be studied with the fables. They need to be carefully chosen. Only those should be selected that are practical, vivid bits of experience and tested wisdom. They will help to make the children mentally alert, and accustom them to a characteristic method of literature—a forceful and terse manner of expression. The alliteration and rhyme in many of the proverbs will please the children; for example:

Make hay while the sun shines. Too many cooks spoil the broth. A new broom sweeps clean. Little boats must keep the shore, larger ships may venture more. Birds of a feather flock together. More haste, less speed. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Many hands make light work. A stitch in time saves nine.

Early to bed and early to rise,

Is the way to be healthy, wealthy and wise.

Well begun is half done. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today. Where there is a will, there is a way, etc.

*Weather proverbs* are very useful, and can be used in the geography lesson as well as in the literature lesson:

March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers. Evening red and morning grey, two sure signs of a very fine day. September, blow soft till the fruit's in the loft. April weather, rain and sunshine both together. Mackerel sky, mackerel sky, never long wet, never long dry. If red the sun begins his race, be sure the rain will fall apace. A sunshiny shower never lasts half-an-hour.

Children enjoy finding proverbs and bringing them to school. From these the teacher can select the ones most worth remembering. Sometimes the children themselves are good judges. In this way an interesting collection can be made to suit different occasions.

In dealing with proverbs, it must be remembered that good results never seem to come from asking children to explain a proverb. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to get from children an exposition or definition. The best way to make sure that they have understood a proverb is to ask them to invent or recall an incident or situation to which the proverb will apply. The children are sure to remember occasions when "more haste" meant "less speed": running to catch a train and forgetting one's purse, running to answer the door and falling down, etc. Naturally, this is not an exercise for the youngest children, and even with the nine- and ten-year-olds, only such proverbs should be chosen as are likely to be within their experiences.

Acting proverbs is another way of making sure the children understand them. This is a valuable exercise, and

children enjoy it. The acting of proverbs is dealt with in Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work.

Proverbs are useful for transcription and dictation. Some can be chosen to teach the use of capitals, contractions, etc.

If the teacher chooses from the above outline of literature, she will give the children an idea of how varied the treasures of literature are; whereas if she chooses in a haphazard way something will be left out. It is unwise for children to study all romantic fairy-tales, or all realistic ones, to have no hero tales or comic tales, and so on. A word must now be said about more modern literature. This has already been touched on in dealing with animal stories.

### More Modern Literature

*Robinson Crusoe*.—This is the great classic of realistic stories. Many teachers have appreciated its value from the days of Rousseau, who chose it as the one book for his ideally educated child.

It is an easy book to prepare for children. One has only to leave out the reflective passages, and translate into modern English any phrases or turns of expression now obsolete. It is a pity it should be rewritten for children if the flavour of Defoe's convincing style has to be destroyed. It forms a cycle of stories or experiences, each experience being treated as a complete thing: visits to the stranded ship, the making of the baskets, the construction of the pots, the sowing of the seeds, etc. These stories are of great value, and they form a link with history—the cave-men. The children like to think of all the advantages Crusoe had compared with the cave-men, and what the cave-men had that Crusoe had not.



Some of these stories or experiences will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book II, "Happy Hours" (O.U.P.). These extracts will make the children want to hear more.

*Robinson Crusoe* correlates well with work the children of eight to ten are doing, or might well be doing. It correlates well with handwork, and, as we have said before, with history, whether they are learning about the cave-men or have advanced as far as the study of great sailors and colonists.

The charm of *Robinson Crusoe*, and the secret of its literary value for children, is its sheer realism. It holds and convinces. Poor imitations of *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, also thrill children, because the old foundation process of getting fire and roof and clothing and bread is the one romance that is forever fresh and thrilling. That is why children enjoy lessons on the cave-men (see Chapter I, HISTORY, Volume II).

It is interesting to let the class which is reading *Robinson Crusoe* read also *Sindbad the Sailor*; the very real adventures of Crusoe are a contrast to the romantic adventures of Sindbad.

*Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*.—Children have to be encouraged to read these books and see the fun of them. They are dealt with in detail in Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work. If possible, let the children see copies of these books with Tenniel's pictures. Through them they will get to know and love the books.

In the upper classes, a few episodes can be read from *Gulliver's Travels*, "The Voyage to Lilliput." Too many of them tend to bore children, who want more complete stories that work to a

pleasing climax, and have incidents more in touch with the life they know. A suitable extract will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book IV, "Cosy Company" (O.U.P.).

There are a number of good modern books of literary value that we want children to read. These should be in the class library or school library. Children are encouraged to read these by having chapters read in class. Sometimes the teacher may leave off at an interesting part and let the children finish the story themselves. Sometimes they can be given a motive for reading the rest, as "Read about such and such an adventure of Pinocchio, and find out what a narrow escape he had," etc. Sometimes the children will read a book carefully and thoughtfully to find out which parts can be dramatized.

A list of books that are classics and should be in every school library are given at the end of Chapter X, pages 120-21, with some notes. Other books, of course, will be added at the teacher's discretion.

## Poetry

It is poetry that gives children the most experience in the musical side of literature. The rhythm and cadence of prose are less obvious to them. Many children, especially the backward type, should first hear and learn poems and rhymes that have an emphatic metre, so emphatic sometimes that it may be possible to accompany the recitation of verses with movements, as clapping or marching. Most children, too, are pleased with the additional music of rhyme, especially terminal rhyme.

The teaching of poetry begins with jingles, "Mother Goose's" rhymes and ballads, and lyrics

The children who come up from the Infant School will know some of these, but they will be pleased to learn new ones. Make sure that they know "Sing a Song of Sixpence," "I Saw a Ship a-Sailing," "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son," "Little Boy Blue," "Jack Horner."

Children especially enjoy the rhymes in "Sing a Song of Sixpence," *rye, pie*. There will be some children to whom *sing—song—pocket, full—four, black-birds—baked* are a delight; others to whom the good arrangement of the vowels will make music.

One should make sure that the children know as many of these old rhymes as possible. All are not too many.

The teacher herself should know something of their social and literary history. They are treasures of primitive art, handed down from mother to mother through many generations. Their variety is delightful: bits of old song and ballad, games, charms, riddles, a gallery of charming portraits—from "Baby Bunting" to quaint old women, with just enough nonsense to suit all ages.

Children of seven, eight, and nine will be interested to know how old these rhymes are. This works in well with their history. They will try to think of the first song or rhyme the cave-woman sang to her baby. Some intelligent children may suggest that "Baby Bunting" was the first lullaby, because the father had to go hunting for clothing, as the cave-men did. Some may suggest "Rock-a-by-Baby," because mothers may have woven little cradles and hung them on the trees to keep the babies out of harm's way. Certainly "Mother Goose's" rhymes should be the first

literary material for children in the Primary Schools.

With regard to lyrics: it is obvious that the less the earlier lyrics say the better. The simpler they are, the more one can emphasize the music and the motion. It is also desirable that some of the earlier verses should be set to music that the children can sing; that often the class march to the rhythm of recited verses, and when possible dance to some.

The lyrics should deal with plants, buds, animals, toys, the wind, and subjects which come naturally under the observation of young children, and therefore lend themselves easily to correlation with everyday life. Simple objective poems suitable for the average or dull child will be found in *Little Gem Poetry Books*, Books I to IV (Bell). These books contain poems and rhymes inspired by country scenes, and will be found especially useful in connection with nature study. Some poems, too, are useful for acting, and many contain choruses and refrains in which all the children may join, as "The Dandelion," "The Chorus of Frogs," "The Clucking Hen," "Lost! A Little Shoe" (Infants' Book, *Little Gem Poetry Books*).

Other useful poems for acting, etc., from Books I, II, III, IV of the same series are: "The Promise," "A Midsummer Song," "The Fox-cub Speaks," "Mooly Cow," "Cherries," "'Tis the Wind," "The Merry Bells of London," "The Fairy Ring" (a poem for a dance), "The Moon," "A Bed-making Chanty," "Daybreak," "The Ballad of Earl Haldan's Daughter," "Lochinvar," etc.

Many lyrics written for children are not suitable, because they record feelings about children and childhood. No

child should be introspective and think about his feelings. Some lyrics are too imaginative, too figurative, or too emotional. This criticism applies to some of Robert Louis Stevenson's poems. The child in the "Garden" is a lonely child. There is no comradeship in the verses. They cannot be recited in concert; there is not a chorus or a refrain in the whole book. (In choosing anthologies for children, it is most important to look for these.) Many of the poems are best read with the single child at home. The following are suitable for class use: "Foreign Lands," "Singing," "Where Go the Boats?" "My Shadow," "The Swing," "My Ship and I," "The Wind," "Birdie with the Yellow Bill." These are the more objective and universal.

It is often possible, in teaching poems, to point out the pattern or structure, as well as helping the children to hear the music. There is the perfect structure of Stevenson's poem,

*Dark brown is the river,  
Golden is the sand.*

The children notice the position of the descriptive words. Let them compare, "The river is dark brown."

The children can easily be led to notice the structure of William Allingham's poem "Wishing" (*Little Gem Poetry Books*, Book I):

*Ring-ting! I wish I were a primrose—  
Nay—stay! I wish I were an elm tree.*

There are a number of suitable lyrics in Christina Rossetti's *Sing-Song* (Macmillan). These poems have the spontaneous birdlike quality that we want children to feel and know.

It is not easy to go wrong in choosing

ballads and narrative poems. There are suitable ballads for the upper classes in nearly all the modern poets—Cowper, Scott, Kingsley, etc. Some of these ballads are suitable for acting—see Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work.

Children will enjoy some of Macaulay's *Lays*, especially in connection with their history (see Volume II). No child should miss hearing and enjoying the lay that tells how Horatius kept the Bridge.

A word must be said here about "Hiawatha." Many teachers like to take parts of this with their children, because it correlates well with nature study and handwork, and because children, especially boys, like stories about Red Indians. But "Hiawatha" should not be taken in its entirety, as one takes, say, "The Adventures of Odysseus." The details of Red Indian life and belief are so beautified as to be misleading, the metre is wearing, and the rhythm unmusical. There is far too much repetition. The redundancy and repetition are not the style one wants to impress on children. But there are pretty passages that are worth studying, and one wants children to have as many varied forms of literature as possible. The following passages are worth taking: (1) Those that deal with Hiawatha's childhood, the forest, and the waters (2) The making of the canoe. It is interesting for the children to compare the making of Robinson Crusoe's boat with the building of Hiawatha's canoe. (3) The story of maize or Indian Corn, that is, the conquest of Mondamin (4) Picture writing; this passage has been dealt with in Chapter IX. It may profitably be interwoven with history (see Volume II).

### Useful Books

The following books are useful for the school library, and form a source of stories for the literature periods:

#### FAIRY-TALES AND FOLK-TALES

Grimms' *Fairy-tales and Household Stories* (Warne).

Grimms' *Goblin and Wonder-tales* (Warne).

Charles Perrault's *Fairy-tales*.

G. W. Dasent's *Norse Fairy-tales*.

G. W. Dasent's *Tales from the Fjeld*.

*The Arabian Nights*, Andrew Lang (Longmans).

#### MORE MODERN FAIRY-TALES AND FANCIFUL TALES

*Pinocchio, the Story of a Puppet*, by Carlo Collodi (Dent). The best puppet story ever written. The little wooden doll that comes to life is in touch with the mind of a child. Children who make puppets and have a puppet theatre will especially enjoy this story.

Hans Andersen's *Fairy-tales and Other Stories*.

*Mopsa the Fairy*, Jean Ingelow (Dent).

*Cuckoo Clock*, Mrs. Molesworth (Macmillan).

*King of the Golden River*, John Ruskin (Harrap).

*Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*. The editions of these books for the school library should contain Tenniel's illustrations.

*The Brownies, and Other Tales*, J. Ewing (Dent).

*The Dr. Dolittle Books*, by Hugh Lofting (Cape).

*Winnie the Pooh*, by A. A. Milne (Methuen).

*A Little Boy Lost*, by W. H. Hudson (Duckworth).

#### FABLES

*Old Gold*, Fables and Parables (Dent).

#### ANIMAL STORIES

*The Jungle Books*, Rudyard Kipling (Macmillan).

*Just-So Stories*, Rudyard Kipling (Macmillan).

*Black Beauty*, Anna Sewell (Dent).

#### HERO STORIES

*Adventures of Odysseus*,\* "King's Treasures of Literature" (Dent).

*The Heroes of Asgard*,\* by A. E. Keary (Macmillan).

*The Wonder Book and Tanglewood Tales*, Nathaniel Hawthorne (Macmillan).

*The Heroes*,\* Charles Kingsley (Macmillan).

*Robin Hood: The Prince of Outlaws*, by Carola Oman (Dent). Useful for the teacher in connection with history.

*Stories of Robin Hood and his Merry Outlaws* (Harrap's "Told Through the Ages" Series).

*Travels of Marco Polo and Hereward the Wake*, by C. Kingsley (see Volume II, HISTORY SECTION).

#### REALISTIC TALES

*Robinson Crusoe*. A complete edition with the original illustrations is very attractive to the children. They enjoy the illustrations, and can tell the story from them. They will also want to hear it read to them. Pupils can read for themselves *The Swiss Family Robinson*, using *The Children's Swiss Family Robinson* ("The Children's Bookshelf," Harrap). A useful edition for the

\* These books are of special value because they are so beautifully expressed

library is *Robinson Crusoe* in Herbert Strang's Library (O.U.P.).

Many useful books for the children's own reading can be obtained in "The Children's Bookshelf Series" (Harrap); for example: *The Children's Tales from Dickens*, *The Children's Br'er Rabbit*, *The Children's Jackanapes*, etc.

## VARIED BOOKS

Children from seven to nine like *What Katy Did*, *Little Women*, *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens*, *Granny's Wonder Chair* (Dent), *The Cuckoo Clock*, by Mrs. Molesworth, *The Wonder Book of Animals*, *The Brownies*, by Mrs. Ewing, etc.

The very bright nine-, ten-, and the eleven-year-old pupils need a very wide range, such as: *Treasure Island*, *King Solomon's Mines*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and easier works of Marryat (especially *Children of the New Forest*, a book all children love, and most useful in connection with history), Ballantyne, Mark Twain, and Charlotte Yonge's historical stories, especially *The Little Duke*, another book beloved by children and most useful in connection with history. They will need, also, many books by Ransome, Ewing, Alcott, Montgomery, Walpole (*Jeremy and Jeremy at School*), and wild-life stories by Thompson,

Seton, Grey Owl, Golden Gorse, Kear-ton, Mortimer Batten, etc. See Herbert Strang's Library (O.U.P.)

In addition to books of literary value and good fiction, there must be books of social, general, scientific, and geographical knowledge, etc., such as easy books like *A Tale in Everything* (University of London Press), suitable to the seven- and eight-year-olds, ranging to *Newnes' Pictorial Knowledge* (George Newnes, Ltd), *The Wonder World Encyclopedia* (Collins), *Children's Encyclopedia* (The Educational Book Co.), *The Book of Knowledge* (Waverley Book Co.), *Reading to Learn* (Macmillan), *Other People's Houses* (Harrap), *What the World Wears* (Harrap), *What the World Eats* (Evans), etc. Books such as these help the children with their projects.

Besides the class library and school library, children from the age of nine plus should be encouraged to use the public library. Some public libraries have the books beautifully arranged. These have shelves of books suitable for children of different ages. The child who can use his reading ability to enjoy a good story in his leisure time, and to gain information to help him in his school work or in his own projects, is likely to make a success of life.

## THE RESPONSE FROM THE CHILDREN

**W**HAT response or return must we expect from the children after the literature lesson? Although in every case we need not insist on any tangible response, it is wise to assume that if a story or poem is to be of pleasure or profit to a child, he must be able to impart it in some way. Indeed, if it has made a vivid impression on him he will want to do this, and should be allowed an opportunity for doing it.

Some suggestions for responses have already been given in connection with the different stories. Here is a summary of them:

(1) *Discussion or Conversation.* — Children like to talk about a story they have enjoyed. There should therefore always be an opportunity after the story for questions and comments. This the teacher must *guide* and *restrain*. Discussion and idle prattle may well spoil the effect of a story. To ask or find out where a place mentioned in the story is; to remember other stories like it and compare them; to select the most exciting part; to discuss the hero or heroine; to add some further adventure, and so on, may all be of value.

With regard to poems, if the teacher has given some explanation before the reading, or led up to the poem by seeing the child has had the necessary experiences to appreciate the poem, or

planned some fitting introduction, no discussion afterwards is necessary. The aesthetic experience may be a complete experience in itself. Sometimes a poem may be read first, and explanations and questions follow. No definite rules can be laid down. Often the sheer joy of repeating a poem they like is response enough.

(2) *Free Play and Dramatization* are in many ways the most satisfactory return that can be asked. These include song, rhythm, dance, and games. In free play the little child represents the characters and acts out the story. His desire to play will lead to a keenness of attention to the story telling, which is the best aid to re-experiencing, and the play will react upon his mind and give greater power to visualize. Nothing, moreover, gives a child more self-reliance and poise than to act, to do something.

Much has been said in previous chapters, and in Section III, about the various dramatic settings and accompaniments of literature. From the treatment of rhymes and jingles as suggestions for games and plays, from rhythm plays—the rhythm of wind and sea, and falling leaves, the rhythm of shoe-making ("The Elves and the Shoemaker," "The Fairy Shoemaker"), the rhythm of weaving and other occupations (*Little Gem Poetry Books*), etc.—from miming, and from the acting of

## THE RESPONSE FROM THE CHILDREN

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stories of various kinds, the child enjoys experiences that widen his outlook and help him to appreciate literature.

(3) *Drawing, Painting, and Crayon Work*, etc.—Stories the children have enjoyed they want to express in some way, if only in scribble. Exercises in drawing, painting, and modelling help to good advantage in objectifying the visual images that the children get from literature.

The drawings of the younger children are mainly of *things* mentioned in the story—houses, tables, trees, etc. Complete representation tires them, and should never be insisted upon. Take the story of "The Country Mouse and the Town Mouse": the good feast atmosphere of the story pleases young children and suits their powers. It is a story to call forth reaction from the child in the form of drawing or colour work. The field of corn and the two mice may be shown in the country scene, and a table with cheese, cakes, and other dainties in the city scene. In his expression the child will represent *what he chooses*, but the teacher, by selecting from among the results the one that is of most value, leads him to better results.

While little children's drawings are often of scattered objects, older children want to portray scenes or figures; this applies especially to intelligent children. They want to draw—Aladdin in the caves with his lamp, Cinderella sitting by the hearth, Nausicaa throwing the ball, Robin Hood stringing his bow, the tent of old Nikomis and its surroundings, and the settings of many stories. This is because the images and pictures they find in literature retain in the minds of the children the glow of imagination. Literature arouses in chil-

dren a mood of imaginative creation such as no other subject can awaken.

(4) *Constructive Work* appeals especially to younger children. Certain stories lend themselves to representation with the help of things. Andersen's story of "The Tin Soldier" can be told objectively upon the table in a classroom. Each child helps to select and provide what is needed to represent the story—green blotting-paper for the yard outside the castle, boxes adapted make a castle, a mirror for a lake, a paper doll can be dressed for a tissue maiden, and so on. With all these things set out the children enjoy telling the tale themselves. After the story of "The Three Bears" the child can make the Bears' kitchen, the table of wood, and the three porridge bowls of clay, or the Bears' bedroom, etc. They enjoy making the homes of story-land people. After the story of "Little Half-Chick" they make a weather-vane with special interest.

When dramatizing stories, simple properties must be made, as paper crowns, a spindle, hatchet, sword, a basket for Red Riding Hood, and flowers for her basket, and so on.

Booklets, book-covers, scrapbooks, etc., are also the result of the literature lessons. Children want booklets with pretty covers for stories they are going to illustrate. They take more pride in their drawings if they are going to be put into a book made by themselves. With duller children the response has always to be in the nature of doing something. Let them collect pictures of the things they hear about in a story. This is especially valuable for children with little imagination, who cannot draw because they have no images in their minds. Pictures can be collected for all the animals mentioned

in the Nursery Rhymes—Ba ba Black Sheep, Bo-Peep's sheep, the Cow that jumped over the Moon, etc. The pictures are mounted in a book or booklet (according to the size of the pictures), and the rhymes printed underneath. Pictures can often be cut from the newspaper, of dogs and cats. The book can be called "Mother Goose's Farmyard," or "Nursery Rhyme Animals," or any title the children like.

Another interesting booklet can contain pictures of houses in Fairy-land; for example: Red Riding Hood's cottage, the pretty cottage of Snow White and Rose Red, the neat, clean little house of the Dwarfs in the story of "Snow White," the house built of gingerbread and ornamented with sweet cakes and tarts, with windows made of barley sugar, in "Little Hans and Megg" (Grimm) or "Hansel and Gretel" (from the opera by Humperdinck).

(5) *Repetition of the Story*, in whole or in part, by members of the class. The best results are obtained by not having the story retold immediately after the children have heard it. They should not understand beforehand that any story is to be retold as a *formal exercise*. It spoils the atmosphere of a story if the children know for a certainty that they are going to be asked to retell it. Let the children sometimes choose for themselves stories they would like to retell. Sometimes the teacher should suggest they retell a story, and show them how to divide the story up, so that each child can take part. They enjoy this. They enjoy, too, retelling a story when there is a refrain in which all the class can join; for example, many of the ballads (see Section III, Varied Forms of Dramatic Work).

In the upper classes, each child can sometimes be asked to choose, prepare, and present to the class a bit of literature. The choice and preparation should, if necessary, be done with the help of the teacher. Many poems are memorized in this way. All the poems taught as literature should be memorized. These poems, like the stories they learn, should not be regarded as formal exercises, to be recited once and finished with. From time to time different children should be asked to say them for the pleasure of the whole class. Sometimes there can be a kind of verse or story festival, when all the poems learnt are brought out and enjoyed. Perhaps another class can be asked to come and listen.

Younger children enjoy retelling cumulative stories in parts, such as "Munachar and Manachar" and "The Half-Chick," both in *The Romance of Reading*, Book II, "Happy Hours" (O.U.P.). Many children can take part in the retelling, thus bringing in a social element which relieves any child's timidity. When children realize the fun they can get by telling the story, there are always requests for parts. The teacher should see that the characters place themselves properly for the retelling of the story. The child who plays the part of Munachar must know where to find the reed, the axe, the stone, water, cow, farmer, brook. The end or climax can be told by eight children. These eight children unwind the story. Many children want to be Manachar, who has nothing to say, but eats blackberries, and bursts in the end!

(6) A pleasant form of creative reaction is the telling of original little stories based on those they have heard. A child can tell the adventures of one



of his toys, modelling his story on the story of the "Tin Soldier." Some may be able to invent an accumulative tale. Older children may like to invent an adventure for Robin Hood, or tell how Robin Hood added a new member to his band.

### Literature and Other Subjects

The connection of literature with history has already been stressed. Any syllabuses where the natural link between these two subjects is made use of is a good syllabus. It helps children to think, and makes the knowledge they acquire in school less of the nature of scattered information.

There is, again, a definite connection between literature and geography. Many books of travel are literature, and in the geography lessons extracts from these books can *sometimes* be read in upper classes. But the connection should not be forced. Children of the Primary School age have not, often, enough background of knowledge to enjoy extracts read aloud unless they are intimately associated with a lesson they have just heard. In a sense the extracts must be *prepared for*, and this often hampers the syllabus. On the other hand, Kipling's "Big Steamers" throws the interest out to other countries, and is an excellent geography lesson for children of all ages.

*The Jungle Books* are full of associated interest with the wilds of India; the *Just-So Stories* also have a wonderful geography background, and give the children the right idea of African deserts, Australian plains, and "The great grey-green greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever trees."

Let the children find the places on the map. There is nothing they enjoy

more than a hunt on an atlas. They will, as they hunt, mumble the words from the story: "from Graham's Town to Kimberley and from Kimberley to Khama's Country, and from Khama's Country east by north to the Limpopo." Stories are more real to a child when he can find places on the map. Besides, this is a practical way of teaching geography, and makes the child realize why he learns geography.

In the history lessons, again, the use of the atlas must be stressed, and again the child can see the use of it. Without it the names of places mean little. They float about in the air, as it were, and prevent the child from thinking. Far too often the atlas is kept only for the geography lesson. Other lessons are supposed not to need it. From the very beginning children must be taught to see the interrelation of subjects, and their purpose. The main reason for learning geography is to know where places are, and the value of this learning can be shown in many lessons from letter writing upwards.

Children like to hear in the literature lesson stories told to children in other lands, and legends or stories that belong especially to some places. A book such as *Round the World in Stories* (University of London Press) again throws the interest on other countries. Children find each place on the map, and pretend to stop there while the story is being told. In this way they travel round the world, even hearing tales of fish as they cross the sea.

There must, of course, never be any forced correlation. Extracts of literary value should not be read because literature *must be* correlated with geography. The correlation must be natural, and should really be a way of thinking. A

thoughtful child wants to know if there really is a river called Limpopo. He wants to see it on the map. Through the association of the story and the map he finds it easy to remember where the river is. It is only by association that memory is helped and thought made possible.

The link between nature study and literature is very obvious: children like poems about the animals they love—dogs, cats, birds, etc., and about flowers they know—the dandelion, daisy, etc. A brown-paper album can be built up by the children, containing their best nature drawings mounted carefully according to the seasons. Under each painting or drawing a quotation is printed, connecting it at once with literature:

*The honeysuckle waits  
For Summer and for heat,  
But violets in the chilly Spring  
Make the turf so sweet.*  
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

*Red leaf and gold leaf  
Rustling down the wind.*  
T. BAILEY ALDRICH.

*Daffy-down dilly has come up to town  
In a yellow petticoat and a green gown.*

*The silver birch is a dainty lady,  
She wears a satin gown.*

*Little ladies, white and green,  
With your spears about you.*

*The buttercup is like a golden cup,  
The marigold is like a golden fill.*  
CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

*So delicate, so airy,  
The almond on the tree,  
Pink stars that some good fairy  
Has made for you and me.*  
K. TYNAN HINKSON.

A similar book can be made for birds, but in this case it is better for the children to find pictures of birds and mount them, instead of drawing them. Many rhymes and poems about birds will be found in *Little Gem Poetry Books*, Books I to IV (Bell).

The making of brown-paper books brings us to literature and handwork. It is literature that can lift manual labour out of the mechanical into the imaginative, to disclose a picture of a world full of men and women doing seriously things that the child himself is doing, making the things that the child is using. If children are themselves weaving, the story of a master weaver will dignify for them their smaller effort, will quicken enthusiasm and fancy. Equally the manual work without such interpretative matter loses value, misses intellectual meaning, remains mere muscular manipulation.

In folk-tales and fairy-tales the child often hears about spindles, spinning, and weaving. Let him see pictures of these things—spindles, spinning-wheels, and looms, otherwise they are mere words to him. (The use of pictures is essential in the case of dull and backward children.) Best of all, let the children do some spinning and weaving themselves (see Handwork Section, Volume IV). There are poems about spinning in *Little Gem Poetry Books* (Bell), and many poems about sheep and shepherds. The Bible stories, too, give children pictures of sheep and shepherds, and woven tent cloths. Then there is the story of Penelope and her loom. In *Round the World in Stories* (U.L.P.), there is a particularly valuable story of a Persian weaver and his rug. Other stories about weaving will be found in *Weaving and Other Pleasant*

*Occupations* (Harrap). A good play about weaving will be found in *The Romance of Reading*, Book III, "Pleasant Paths" (O.U.P.). This play shows the rhythm of weaving.

When a child handles a piece of cloth one wants him almost automatically to see shepherds with their flocks, grandmother with her wheel, the weaver at his loom. When he walks on rugs one would have him see the black tents of the desert, the dyer of infinite skill and patience, the family with its tradition of weaving. Whenever he sees things, one wants him also to see the workers. The intellectual value of such mental habits, one hopes, may consist in an interest in social activity, and *interrelations* everywhere, in admiration, perhaps, for good work generally, and as a result a wish to do good work.

The history lessons, as planned in Volume II, give the children stories and pictures of workers—beginning with the cave-man—pictures of potters, weavers, builders, rug makers, metal-workers, etc. These help to give the child a picture of a world full of busy people.

In the following books the interrelations of literature with occupations, as well as with other subjects in the curriculum, is stressed.

*A Tale in Everything* (U.L.P.).—Here literature is linked with clothing, things to eat, the stars and lights in the sky, fire and lights on earth, travellers, homes and shelters, music, the seasons, clouds, rain and weather, trees, flowers, brooks, etc. These stories are especially suitable for the younger children of seven and eight, and backward nines.

*Round the World in Stories* (U.L.P.).—These stories are an attempt to link up the countries of the world through

stories. Children can carry on these projects for themselves by finding out, whenever possible, the origin of the stories they read—and trying to find stories for every country. Grimms' stories give them many for Germany; Perrault's "Cinderella" gives them one for France; "The Billy-Goats Gruff," one for Norway; "The Half-Chick," one for Spain, and so on.

*Projects for the Junior School*, Books I to IV (Harrap).—These projects show, as most projects do, the natural interrelation of many subjects.

*Weaving and Other Pleasant Occupations* (Harrap), stresses the value of interpretative matter (literature) in connection with manual occupations, and especially with weaving.

*The Romance of Reading*, Books I to IV (O.U.P.).—Here will be found varied bits of literature that open up to the children countries far away, workers at home, the animal world, the world of fancy, and so on. The exercises at the end suggest a variety of useful correlations.

*Craftsmen All* (Dryad Press), although too advanced for the Primary School, contains many stories of craftsmen that might be adapted to the needs of younger children.

The whole purpose of teaching is to help children to associate ideas or things that help each other by their association; in other words, *to help them to think*. It needs an effort to think. Many children do not try even to associate the work in one class with the work in the next, and, sad to say, teachers do not always help them. "Oh, we have done that," children say airily, never thinking it can be done again from a different point of view. To point out to children that the story of "The

Three Billy-Goats Gruff" is more than just a story for babies is to open the child's eyes to the value of work in every class. At the beginning of every year's work, it is worth while stressing the connections between the new work and the old, the new stories and the old, and so on. Sequence is almost as important in literature, and indeed in every subject, as it is in history. Sequence, again, is a way of thinking.

### Two Examples of the Correlation of Literature and History

(1) "*Hector's Farewell to Andromache*."—This is one of the most moving passages in Homer's *Iliad* (see Chapter X). It should be read to the children in connection with their lessons on Greece in Volume II, History, Chapter VIII. It makes history come alive to the children, and in this way a lasting interest may be aroused in one of the most important subjects in the curriculum.

#### HECTOR'S FAREWELL TO ANDROMACHE

LONG ago, when our land was still covered with deep forests, where hunters stained their bodies with blue woad and wrapped them in the skins of the bears and wolves they killed, Greece was already a famous country. Men practised sports and danced and made music, while poets wrote songs and epic tales of deeds which are famous still.

Greatest of all the Greek poets was the blind Homer. Just when he lived no one knows, but most likely it was about three thousand years ago. His best-known poem tells of things which had happened long before his own times, in and around a city which we

call Troy, but the Greeks called Ilium. That is why this poem of Homer's is known as the *Iliad*.

Today there is nothing of Troy but a hump of earth a few miles south of what we call the Dardanelles, but at the time of which Homer tells it was a proud city with a proud king named Priam. He and his wife Hecuba had many sturdy sons, but one of them was specially noted for his good looks. His name was Paris.

Greece at that time was made up of many small states, and one of them was famous above the rest for its warriors. It was called Sparta, and its king, Menelaus, had married Helen, the most beautiful woman in all Greece, perhaps in all the world.

So there they were, Greece on the one side and Troy on the other, with the blue Ægean between, dotted with a thousand islets. Doubtless the two countries were jealous of one another, as countries too often are, but they had never come to blows until the fatal day when Paris came to Sparta with messages from Priam, his father. Menelaus was away at the time, but Helen was not, and when the handsome young prince saw her he fell so much in love that he could not rest until he had carried her away with him, over the sea to Troy.

You may imagine Menelaus's anger when he returned. Calling together his mighty captains, he declared that he would make war upon Troy, and not rest until it was laid waste and Helen brought back to Sparta.

And it was not only Spartan warriors he called. No less than twenty-eight other Grecian kings and princes had wished to marry Helen, and when she chose Menelaus they had taken a vow

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that they would come to her help if ever she needed it; and now that time had come. Among the warriors were some whose names are famous still: Agamemnon, Menelaus's brother, who was chosen to be commander-in-chief; Achilles, fiercest warrior of them all; the cunning Ulysses, about whose travels another poem was to be written; and old Nestor, noted for his wisdom. Together they took ship, and presently landed with their men not far from Troy.

So began the Trojan War, which dragged on for ten weary years until a band of Greeks got inside the city walls by means of the trick of the wooden horse, of which you may have heard the story, and Helen was carried back to Greece again. It was as foolish and wasteful of good men's lives as most wars are, but it gave rise to many deeds of daring, and to at least one sad and beautiful story, of which you shall now hear a part.

Andromache was the young wife of Hector, Priam's warrior son and defender of Troy. Though less handsome than Paris, he was the bravest man of them all, which is better, so that it was a good day for Andromache when he fell in love with her. It was a good day for Hector too, for though Andromache was less famed for her beauty than Helen, she was beautiful enough, and very much more worth fighting for.

So they were married and lived in quiet happiness together in spite of the Greek armies encamped in the plain before Troy. Andromache knew what a brave man her husband was, and Hector knew that his young wife had what matters more than the fairest

face: sweetness and faithful goodness. In time they had the only other thing they wanted, a son who promised to be as fine a man as his father, and they named him Ashtanax, though sometimes he was called Scamandrius.

In spite of the terrible war there was not a happier woman in all Troy than Andromache, except that she dreaded the days when Hector girded on his shining armour and went out to lead his men in battle against their Grecian enemies.

But even then she hid her tears until he was gone, and she was free to hurry to the temple of the goddess Athena to pray for his safe return. Those days came more and more often, for in spite of Hector's bravery the fierce Greeks drew nearer and nearer to the gates of Troy. At last came a time when even he knew that they could not be held off much longer. During a lull in the battle he hurried back into the city and went to the palace to see his wife and son once more, and to beg her and her maidens to pray in the temple for the safety of Troy.

But Andromache was not in the palace or in the temple. Hearing that the Trojans were hard pressed, she had gone to the city walls to look down on the battle. And there, as Homer says, "she met Hector, and with her came the handmaid bearing the little child like a beautiful star. So now he smiled and gazed at his boy silently, and Andromache stood at his side weeping, and clasped her hand in his, and called upon his name:

"Dear my lord, thy boldness will undo thee. Hast thou no pity for thy boy or for thy widow, as I soon must be, for surely the Greeks will set upon thee and slay thee? It would be better

for me to go down to the grave than to lose thee, my husband, for there will be nought but grief for me once thou hast met thy fate."

At this Hector seemed to weaken, and for once Andromache forgot the duty of a warrior's wife. Thinking from his looks that he was ready to give up the battle, she pointed over the wall to a place where it would be easy for her husband and his men to hide from the enemy. Hide from the enemy!—that was a thing he had never done, and it was the soldier who spoke now, though gently still:

"Surely I should be sore ashamed if I shrank like a coward from battle. I know that the day will come for holy Ilios to be laid low, yet it is not the grief of the Trojans that troubles me, nor even of Hecuba my lady mother, nor of Priam my father, nor of my brothers. My sorrow is for thee alone. May the heaped earth cover me ere I hear thy cries as some mail-clad Greek leads thee captive away."

Andromache had no answer to make, even if she could have spoken at that moment, and in silence they turned to their little son. But he was afraid of his father's shining helmet with its great plume of horsehair, and shrank back into his nurse's arms.

"At this (as Homer says) his father could not help laughing, and his lady mother laughed too, and the glorious Hector took his helmet from his head and laid it shining on the stones, and took his dear son and kissed him and danced him in his arms. Then after a while he offered up this prayer to Zeus and all the gods:

"Grant that in time to come this my son may even be as I am, a leader among the Trojans and a great king of

Ilios. As he returns from battle may men say of him that he is greater than his father was, and may his mother's heart be glad."

Andromache could not join in this prayer that her son might spend his life as a soldier, but she smiled through her tears as she took him from his mighty father's arms, "so that her husband had pity to see her, and said, 'My dear one, I pray thee be not over sorrowful at heart, for no man shall slay me if it be not the will of the gods. Go now to the house and be busy about thine own tasks. The men will look after the affairs of war, and I at their head.'

"So said the glorious Hector, and took up his shining helmet with its horsehair crest, and his dear wife went her way to her own place, though often looking back through her tears."

Then the story saddens, so we will follow it no further, but leave it while little Astyanax, beautiful as a star, and the brave and kindly Hector are still happy in the thought of Andromache, the most lovable woman in this old tale of long ago.

(2) *A Play*: "The Sword in the Stone," a Legend of King Arthur (see Chapter X). This story is valuable from the point of view of literature and history. Children will like to hear it read and join in the refrains, and then act it themselves. In the history lessons (Volume II, HISTORY) they will have heard about the Britons, the Romans, the Saxons, and King Vortigern. (See the play about him in the History Section.) Again, this play will make the past more real and interesting. The story of King Arthur definitely belongs to literature, and

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should be taken in the literature lesson, but it helps history. The historical value of the legend is given in the note at the beginning of the play.

*Note.*—Though much of the Arthurian story is legendary, Arthur was an historical figure—a Romano-British king or leader of the late fifth century who led the western Britons against the Anglo-Saxons and defeated them in twelve great battles. He knew how the Romans on the Continent fought with armour and cavalry, and trained his knights to do the same. The heathen Saxons, on the other hand, were infantrymen, and never became otherwise. They fought with spears, and used little or no body armour. Arthur was, in a sense, the last of the Romans, and the story of Roman Britain ends with him.

As to Merlin, the story goes that he was taken as a boy to Vortigern's court in the West, to be used as a human sacrifice, but saved his life by his precocious astuteness, and later became the friend and adviser of another western king, Uther Pendragon. The story of how Uther's son Arthur later became king is the subject of the following play.

### THE SWORD IN THE STONE

#### A LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

##### *Characters:*

Merlin	A Townsman
Sir Ector	Townsmen,
Sir Kay, his son	Women and
Arthur	Children
Sir Madoc	Barons, Knights,
Sir Griffith	Squires and
Two Uichins	Pages
An Archbishop	Choristers (optional)
A Server	

(MERLIN appears before the curtains, his cloak about him.)

MERLIN: I am Merlin,  
Merlin the enchanter, as some folk  
would say.

Long was Pendragon my friend,  
Uther Pendragon, great king of the  
west:

But Uther Pendragon is dead;  
Britain no more has a king  
Leading the knights and the barons in  
battle

To sweep back the hordes from the east,  
The Saxons and Angles invading our  
shores,

Had Uther Pendragon no son, then?  
None knows, for he vanished at birth.  
I, Merlin, know well, some folk hold,  
But whether or not that is truth,  
I care not to say:

Wiser to wait until time waits on me,  
As now on this day, when at last I have  
summoned

The nobles and lords of this island  
At Christmas in London, to gather  
At the church of St. Paul's  
To discover their king.

To them will I speak as they wait,  
I, Merlin, enchanter, as some folk  
would say.

(*The curtains part as he turns, showing nobles, knights, and squires around a great marble stone in which stands a sword. Well down to one side stand Sir Ector, Sir Kay, and Arthur, who is much younger.*)

MERLIN: My lords, I Merlin have  
called you here. Our country is with-  
out a king Uther Pendragon had a  
son, they say, but where he is, who  
knows? Whether he is alive or dead,  
who knows? But the time has come  
when this land can be without a king  
no longer, a strong king to fight, to  
ward off our enemies, to right wrongs,

to guard the poor against plunderers, the weak against the merciless strong. Some there may be who do not think as I do. Some there may be who would rather remain kingless, who think more of their own profit than of the common good. But for them the time has come. The sword that is in this stone shall hold them in their places.

Upon the stone are words written. Read them, Sir Madoc, that all may hear.

MADOC (*reading*): Whoever pulls this sword from out the stone, he is the true king of Britain.

MERLIN: "Whoever pulls this sword from out the stone, he is the true king of Britain." Sir Madoc, you are a man of strength. You shall be the first to try your might.

MADOC: As you will, Merlin. (*He tries but fails.*) It is beyond my strength.

MERLIN: Then let others try. (*They do, but fail.*) Sir Ector, you are an older man, but you are wise. Perhaps there may be more strength in wisdom than in the strongest arm. (*Sir Ector tries, and fails.*) No? Then this young son of yours, Sir Kay. (*Sir Kay tries, and fails.*) Still no. Is there any other who would try?

ARTHUR: May I? (*Everyone laughs.*)

MERLIN: You, boy? What is your name?

ARTHUR: Arthur. Sir Ector is my father, Sir Kay my brother.

MERLIN: And do you think you might win where so many strong men have lost?

ARTHUR: If I were true king of Britain I should be strong enough, I think.

MERLIN: Well said, boy. But what would these lords do with you if you succeeded? Do you think they want a

child for a king? No, boy. You shall try your fortune in good time, but that is not yet. My lords, it would seem that none here is your true king. What shall be done?

GRIFFIN: Today is Christmas. Let a great tournament be called for New Year, which every knight and baron in Britain must attend. Surely among so many the true king will be found.

MERLIN: Let it be so, and till New Year let knights keep guard over the sword in the stone. Who will stand?

TEN KNIGHTS (*one after another*): I . . . and I . . . etc.

(*They take their places. Then, on a stage, the lights would dim until only the white stone could be seen. The voice is heard of Merlin, who stands to one side. Almost at once the lights begin to rise again, so that the knights can be seen standing on guard and people passing across in front of them.*)

MERLIN: The days pass by. From every hand

Barons, knights, squires, and pages come;

The city rings with clash of arms,  
And hoof on pavement.

At last, when all the world, it seems,  
Has crowded to the tilting ground,  
Even the ten knights sheathe their  
swords

And go their way.

(*The knights march off and MERLIN follows. A moment later KAY and ARTHUR enter on the other side with SIR ECTOR, who is speaking hastily.*)

ECTOR: If we make haste, we shall still be in time enough. No, Arthur, do not stay looking at the stone now, there is no time. (*To KAY*) Why, boy, where is your sword?

KAY: What a fool I am! I forgot to find it on. Well, I must go without.



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ECTOR: A knight on the tilting ground without a sword?

ARTHUR: No, Kay, you must have a sword. I would go back for it, but the house is locked and the servants are gone to the tilting. I wish I could pull out this one for you.

KAY (*laughing*): Then I should be king of Britain.

ARTHUR: I should like that.

ECTOR: No, Arthur, you must not touch.

ARTHUR: But Merlin said I could try one day. Only just a little pull, Father.

ECTOR: Very well.

ARTHUR: Now—I pull. (*The sword comes out of the stone.*)

ECTOR: Why, what have you done? (*He and Kay kneel.*)

ARTHUR: Father! Kay! Why are you doing that?

KAY: Because you must be king of Britain.

ARTHUR: I? King of Britain? You are making fun of me. Besides, I pulled it out for Kay. If anyone is king, it is he.

ECTOR: No, boy. It is yourself.

ARTHUR: But how can it be? How can I be king if you are my father? You are not of king's blood, are you?

ECTOR: No, Arthur. I would not have told you yet unless I need, but though I have cared for you and loved you as my own, you are not in truth my son.

ARTHUR: I don't understand what you say. Do you mean you are not my father?

ECTOR: It is as you say.

ARTHUR: And Kay is not my brother?

ECTOR: No, Arthur.

ARTHUR (*much upset*): Oh, but he must be my brother. What should I do without my brother, and my father? I couldn't bear it. Please be my father

again as you always have been. I want you to be. I don't want to be anyone else's son, and I don't like you kneeling before me. Why do you? Why don't you stop?

ECTOR: We may not rise until you give us leave, sire.

ARTHUR: Please get up. (*They do so.*) Now tell me why you are not my father.

ECTOR: That, Merlin must tell you. Besides, we must not spend time in talk. Sire, may I have the sword? (*ARTHUR hands it to him and, after looking cautiously this way and that, he slips it back into the stone.*) There. Now you are king no more. You are Arthur, my dear son, again for a little while.

ARTHUR: I am glad.

ECTOR: Now listen, both of you: not a soul must hear of this. It would be dangerous.

KAY: But, Father!—if they know that Arthur is their king, surely every true knight will stand by him?

ECTOR: Yes, Kay: every true knight. But not every knight yonder deserves the name of true, and though they say they want a king, they lie. They would rather be free to fight and rob and plunder and burn and lay waste to their wicked hearts' content. If they knew Arthur were king, his life might not be worth an hour's purchase. That was why Merlin would not let him touch the sword on Christmas Day. He is biding his time. Merlin is cunning and wise, and so must we be. You promise to keep silence?

KAY: I promise, Father.

ARTHUR: So do I. I don't want anyone to know, ever. Besides, Father, I still don't think I am the one. I believe the sword came out because I was pulling it for Kay.

(Here the two urchins steal on. Seeing great folk there, they mime caution and hide down in front of the front curtains so that they can be seen by the audience but not by those on the stage. When they speak, it is in undertones.)

ECTOR: Then you had better put it to the proof, once and for all. But wait. . .

FIRST URCHIN: What are they going to do?

ECTOR: No, there is no one in sight.

SECOND URCHIN: They're going to have a tug at the sword.

ECTOR: First I will try once more. (He pulls, and fails.)

FIRST URCHIN: He's no good.

ECTOR: Now, Kay my son.

SECOND URCHIN: I wish I could have a go.

FIRST URCHIN: You!

KAY (having tried and failed): No, it is not for me.

ECTOR: Now, Arthur, my boy.

(Arthur withdraws the sword.)

SECOND URCHIN: Cool! He's done it.

FIRST URCHIN: That means he's king.

SECOND URCHIN: King of Britain!

ECTOR: Who is that? Quickly!—put back the sword.

(Arthur does so.)

FIRST URCHIN: Let's tell everybody. Come on.

(Dodging SIR ECTOR and KAY, they rush off, one on each side, yelling: "They've found the king!" "They've found the king of Britain!" etc. Quickly a babble grows on both sides of the stage, at first quietly, as if in the distance. "What's this?" "Who is the king?" etc. MERLIN hurries on from the tournament side.)

MERLIN: What is this? What has happened?

ECTOR: Arthur withdrew the sword. We were overlooked. What shall we do?

MERLIN: Stand aside with me here. I shall do as I think best. Be led by me.

(The babble suddenly grows, and knights begin to flock on excitedly from the tournament side, and townspeople from the other. These are joined by the two urchins, who keep pointing at the group in the corner. One can imagine them saying: "That's him." MERLIN steps forward, and there is silence.)

MERLIN: My lords, and you, good people, have heard the news. I would it had been withheld for a time, but it must be as fate wills. Your rightful king, Uther Pendragon's son, is among us. He has drawn the sword from the stone.

MADOC: How are we to know that, Merlin?

MERLIN: You may see him draw it again. Sir Madoc, you were the first to try on Christmas Day. Play try again now, before all men.

MADOC (after failing): It is beyond human strength.

MERLIN: You shall see (He leads ARTHUR forward, and there is a buzz of surprise, which dies down as ARTHUR puts his hand on the sword.) Now, Arthur.

(ARTHUR draws the sword. For a moment there is silence. Then all kneel except some of the knights and barons, among them SIR MADOC and SIR GRIFFITH.)

MERLIN: My lords, have you forgotten how to bend the knee before your king?

MADOC: How are we to know that he is our king? He has always been known as the son of Sir Ector here.

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ECTOR: But he is not. That I have already told him.

GRIFFITH: But that does not prove that he is Uther Pendragon's son.

MERLIN: And yet he is. On the night he was born I carried him away, and gave him to this good knight to rear in safety.

MADOC: Why?

MERLIN: You should know that, Sir Madoc—you and your fellows who are not kneeling. His father being already dead, who would have guarded the child?

GRIFFITH: We have only your word for it that this is true.

MERLIN: And the sword in the stone.

MADOC: But how are we to know that that is the true test?

GRIFFITH: How are we to know that the stone is not of your quarrying, and the sword of your setting?

MADOC: You are a sorcerer, all the world knows that. Why should you not hold the sword in the stone by magic against all but a tool of your own?

MERLIN: You must think me strangely powerful, my lords. If you will not take my word, you must believe what you will. But look around you. Not everyone thinks as you do.

GRIFFITH: We shall need time to consider.

MADOC: Let us wait till Candlemas and try again.

ALL WHO ARE STANDING: Yes. Let us wait till Candlemas.

MERLIN: As you will, my lords.

*(Here again, on a stage, the lights will darken until only MERLIN can be seen standing forward)*

MERLIN: Candlemas will come with the change of the year,  
And Arthur draw the sword again,  
But still the cry of those who stand,

Of those who wish not for a king,  
Will be for longer waiting.

Again as at New Year they cry:

MADOC: Let us wait till Christmas comes once more.

VOICES: Yes. Let us wait till Christmas.

MERLIN: And then at Christmas yet again:

GRIFFITH: Let us wait till Easter.

VOICES: Yes. Let us wait till Easter.

MERLIN: And still when Easter brings the foam

Of blossom on the holy thorn,  
Loud rings to heaven the angry cry:

MADOC and GRIFFITH: Let us wait till Pentecost.

VOICES: Yes. Let us wait till Pentecost.

MERLIN: Slowly the months go by,  
From Christmas Day to Pentecost,  
And then to Pentecost again;  
But wasted months they have not been:  
Faster and faster with the days  
The loyal knights are gathering,  
The dead Pendragon's trusted friends;  
The people too will have their will:  
Waiting they stand, as once again  
Upon the sword hilt Arthur lays his hand.

*(Here the lights rise again, showing ARTHUR standing with his hand upon the sword. The stage is crowded with townspeople on one side and knights on the other. Prominent among these are SIR ECTOR, KAY, and the enemy barons. MERLIN steps back and stands by ARTHUR.)*

MERLIN: Now, Arthur.

*(ARTHUR once more draws the sword. The people begin to kneel.)*

MERLIN: No, friends. There is a time for kneeling and a time for standing fast. Let those who would have Arthur king still stand. If there are others, let

them speak while there is time. Sir Madoc?

(SIR MADOC steps forward, but at once a hissing sound is heard among the people. Someone cries, "We will have our king," and immediately they are all shouting):

PEOPLE: { We will have our king!  
It is the will of God!  
Long live the king of  
Britain!  
We have waited too long!  
Down with the king's  
enemies!  
Down with the robbers, the  
plunderers!  
We will have our king!  
The king! The king!

(MERLIN raises his hand, and there is silence. SIR MADOC drops back among his friends.)

MERLIN: Sir Madoc, you have heard what they say. Will you speak? No? Sir Griffith? No? Or any of your company? No? Then let all who would see Arthur king, cry "Ayl!"

(All the people cry "Ayl Ayl!" and most of the knights too, drawing their swords as they do so, and holding them high.)

MERLIN: And let the rest cry "No."

(There is a low, angry sound as everyone looks at SIR MADOC and his friends. They do not speak, and the noise grows loud and cheerful. There is silence when MERLIN claps his hands, and they watch as ARTHUR kisses the sword and lays it on the stone. Then two men come on, carrying some kind of seat, and set it in a convenient place. ARTHUR sits in it, and at a sign from MERLIN SIR KAY and certain knights stand on each side of it as a guard, with bare swords presented. MERLIN stands on

one side of the throne. ARTHUR goes and takes SIR ECTOR's hand and makes him stand on the other side.)

ARTHUR: I shall always think of you as my father. What should I do without you at my side?

(Here there may be a sound of singing, and choristers enter. Then comes a server with a crown on a red cushion, the Archbishop following.)

ARCHBISHOP: Let all kneel who will serve their king with honour and good faith.

(All but the guard kneel. SIR MADOC and his friends move last and unwillingly—but they kneel. The ARCHBISHOP places the crown on ARTHUR's head.)

ARCHBISHOP: Reign justly under the one God, Arthur, King of Britain.

(There is a moment's silence as the Archbishop stands aside.)

ARTHUR: It is I who should kneel to you, not you to me, for I vow from this day to be the servant of all true men. Rise, my people.

ALL (rising): The king! The king! The king!

ARTHUR: I shall speak few words now, but this I would say: It is not of my choosing that I am your king. I would rather have stayed a boy, the son of this good knight. But since I am called to this high place, I will do my best to fill it as my father Uther Pendragon did before me. I am young, but Merlin and Sir Ector and others, I know, will guide me well until I am of age to stand by myself. Then and now I swear to be a true king to you, my lords, and to you, my people, all the days of my life. My lords, you will have many chances to speak with me, and so shall you, good people. But to show that those are no empty words,

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you shall be the first. If you have anything to ask me, speak freely now.

*(The townspeople push one of their number forward. He kneels.)*

TOWNSMAN: Sir, times have been hard for the likes of us since your good father died. Some of us have lost what little land we had, and some their hard-earned money. In the forest wild beasts roam, but we may not kill them, even to protect our children: they are kept to give sport to our betters. In some parts, they say, dwell giants who kill brave men and imprison fair ladies. Those are only hearsay to me, but there is no hearsay about some of the great ones who make our lives a misery. Knights they call themselves—yes, and some of them are here—but there is little knighthood in their dealings with the likes of us. If theirs is knighthood, we'd be better without it, that's all I can say.

*(The people agree angrily. ARTHUR steps down and raises the TOWNSMAN from his knees.)*

ARTHUR: Rise, my brother. By the help of God and this good sword, the land shall be cleared of these crying evils. So surely as I hear a tale of wrong I will send knights, true knights, if I may not come myself on the adventure, to make all right again. Give me but your help, my people, and by hook or by crook it shall be done.

PEOPLE: We will! We will!

*(The TOWNSMAN rejoins his friends and ARTHUR turns to the lords.)*

ARTHUR: And you, my lords?

LORDS: We will! We will!

ARTHUR: In a tale Sir Ector once told me, there was a good king who had a mighty castle. And in this castle was a great table which had neither top nor bottom.

FIRST URCIN: How could that be?

ARTHUR: Because it was round.

SECOND URCIN: There you are, silly!

ARTHUR: And at this table all men sat equally, king and knights together. I will have such a table as that in my castle at Camelot, and in days to come the greatest honour any man can have shall be to be known as one of the Knights of the Round Table. With such a hand as that, and with you, good people, behind us to a man, we could make this land of ours such as it has never been since time began. Shall we do it?

PEOPLE: We will! We will!

*(They are still shouting, cheering, and throwing up hats as the*

CURTAINS CLOSE.)

It is worth explaining to the children that many legends and songs about "King" Arthur were made up long after his day (Arthur won his last great battle about A.D. 500). These were told or sung in castle halls and at the courts of kings; for example, in the twelfth century there came to the court of the French king a knight called Chrestian of Troyes. He sang romantic tales of King Arthur of Britain and his knights. Who King Arthur was and when he lived did not interest Chrestian. He made King Arthur the most perfect knight that the world had ever seen. The ladies in his stories were all fair, and gentle, and dressed in ermine and silk, and the knights courteous, generous, and brave. Later, in England, Sir Thomas Malory in the fifteenth century wrote stories of King Arthur and his wonderful knights. It was one of the books first printed in England by Caxton.

Most children want to know how men became knights in olden days. It was a long training. Every young noble was sent at the age of about eight to the castle of a great lord, where he was trained with other boys to be a page. Here he wore his lord's livery and had to wait upon him. He was taught by a special master or tutor, and learnt how to serve at table, how to behave politely, to sing, play the harp or viol, to ride, to hawk, to shoot with a bow and arrow, and many other things. The ladies of the castle helped in his training. At fourteen he became a squire and followed his lord when he went hunting or to battle, and served him well. When he was twenty-one, if he were judged worthy, he was made a knight by his lord or by the king, who girded on his sword. This sword was laid before the altar of a church all night and watched by the young squire. This vigil was to remind the would-be knight that he was to fight for God and the right. The next day he was clad in everything new, as a sign that he was beginning a new life. He took his vows in the presence of the knights and ladies of the castle. He promised to be true to Christ and his lord and king, never to tell a lie or break his word, to protect the weak, and to help all women in distress. Knights and ladies helped him to put on his shining armour and golden spurs. Then he knelt before his lord, who tapped him on the shoulder with the flat side of his sword, saying, "I dub thee knight in the name of God, St. Michael and St. George. Be brave, ready, and loyal."

Knights rode to battle in armour and with helmets or hoods of steel.

They were so completely covered with their armour that in battle it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe; for this reason they had, on the loose linen covering that went over their armour, a pattern of some kind. These patterns or designs were known as coats-of-arms. Knights also had their coats-of-arms on their shields.

When the knights were not fighting for their lord or king, they kept themselves in practice by playing at fighting in *tournaments* (see play). The tournament was held in a field surrounded by palisades or lists, so the scene of contest was often called "the lists." Large crowds gathered to watch the knights trying to unhorse each other with their lances (the points were covered so that they could not make a wound) as crowds watch football today.

Many intelligent children see the resemblance between the knights of the Middle Ages and the boy scouts of today. Older children may like to discuss the influence of the stories of King Arthur and his knights on the people of these days. Do they make people kinder and more polite? The question of how men become knights today is sure to arise. Children, too, will be interested in words we use today that remind us of the knights of long ago. Knights learned to be kind and polite, that is to be *gentlemen*. We still speak today of people who have good manners and are courteous, especially to women, as *knightly*, or *chivalrous* (*chivalry* means horsemen, cp. *cavalry*; all knights were horsemen). To be chivalrous is to be like a knight. The knights of King Arthur typify the high ideals which we call "chivalry."

SECTION TWO

**PRACTICAL  
SPEECH TRAINING**

CHAPTER ONE

## THE COMMON-SENSE OF SPEECH TRAINING

**N**EXT to breathing, speech is the most constant of our more or less conscious activities. That is probably the chief reason why the sheer wonder of it is commonly overlooked, in schools as elsewhere. Yet its interest is so curious and human and constant that even in schools where speech is uniformly perfect, if such exist, it would still deserve a place of honour in the curriculum. It is now generally recognized, at least in the Infant and Junior Departments, that the spoken word is of more urgent importance than the written, and that good oral work is the only sure foundation for good writing; but it is still only in the minority of schools that the manner as well as the matter of speech receives anything like adequate attention.

One reason for this is that so many teachers regard speech training as a recondite and difficult business, a matter for highly trained specialists. This is not true. Specialist knowledge is of course useful, and should if possible be acquired; but the fact remains that much first-class work is done by

teachers whose only qualifications are that they recognize the importance and interest of speech, that they have trained their ears by attention to it, that they know how to interest children, and that they use their common-sense—by no means the least-important qualification. Their success proves the assertion that all who realize the importance and interest of speech, and are willing to work at it regularly and intelligently, can exert an influence for which their pupils will have lifelong reason to be grateful.

Another reason for the infrequency of specific speech-training periods is that time-tables are commonly overcrowded. Even teachers who are interested in speech are apt to take the view that the necessary work can be done in passing and in odd minutes. While it is true that speech training is in fact a constant activity, inevitably going on in every period in which speaking takes place, whatever the subject, the fact still remains that definite periods are advisable. For one thing, they are a recognition of the importance of speech. For another, they save teachers' time and children's patience.

In poetry and reading lessons, for example, it is not uncommon for individual children to be pulled up while faults of pronunciation and the like are corrected. This is bad tactics. The child suffering correction feels conspicuous, while the others either think about something else or placidly read on, if they are sufficiently interested. The total curative effect is practically nil, and to make matters worse the reading thread is lost and interest is dissipated. In short, so-called current correction is the commonest example of the fault of trying to do two important things at once.

If, instead of interrupting reading in this way, teachers took note of matters needing correction and discussion, and pooled them in a definite speech period, there would be a saving of time and interest, to say nothing of the gain in permanent effectiveness. Besides, as has already been suggested, the speech period can easily be made intensely interesting and amusing. It can and should become something for the children to look forward to, a living nucleus for the speech work which, as we have seen, is inevitably proceeding during every moment of school time in which speech is in progress. If this is achieved, we can do much more than improve children's speech in the narrower sense of the phrase: we can give them an interest which will last them, and influence their speech, for the rest of their lives.

The following suggestions as to how both these aims, the larger as well as the smaller, may be compassed fall naturally into two main divisions, the general and the practical; and the point must be stressed at once that the first is the more important of the two. There

are plenty of good practical books from which a wealth of exercises may be drawn, but few of them pay adequate attention to what may be called the background and rich humanity of speech. This narrowness of outlook is the chief cause of failure in speech training. If we link speech on the one hand with the beauty of poetry, and on the other with the reality of everyday life, we are half-way to success. How is that to be done?

## **The Teacher's Attitude**

A fact which cannot be too strongly stressed is that effectiveness in speech training largely depends upon our own attitude and approach. Our speech accomplishment is also obviously important. A pleasant, well-modulated voice, clear but not too loud, and an articulation which, while avoiding slovenliness, is not too good to be true—abilities which almost anyone can acquire who will take the trouble—have an incalculable and lasting influence upon children. Well-spoken teachers commonly mean well-spoken classes, especially if speech periods are the rule, and are chiefly used, as they should be, to make children conscious of the pleasure, beauty, and quiddity of speech.

Another characteristic which is essential in speech training is tolerance and humour, the opposite of censoriousness. Confronted with children whose speech one very definitely does not like, one naturally feels a missionary urge to mount the high horse and talk about "good" speech and "bad." It must be resisted, if only because it is the quickest way to arouse antagonism. After all, the speech which we are stigmatizing is probably what the children hear out of



school and from their parents—and if we set ourselves up against parents we are riding for a fall. Besides, not a few types of speech which we are occasionally apt to call bad are not bad at all: they are merely unfashionable. They are, in fact, examples of dialect, which we shall need to consider in due course, together with the questions of bilingualism and of genuinely bad speech.

We can summarize the last paragraph very simply by saying that we should treat children in the matter of speech with kindness and courtesy. By so doing we shall build up among the children themselves a habit of speech courtesy which will stand us in good stead, as we shall see when discussing speech incentives. But before going on to that interesting subject we had better discuss what are, in fact, our main aims.

### Main Aims in Speech Training

(1) Our more general aims may be summarized in a single phrase: we want to “sell” speech to children as an interesting and amusing hobby, which can be pursued in school and out with the minimum of apparatus—pencil, paper, and a small piece of looking-glass—and no expense at all.

(2) As we have already seen, we want to enable them to appreciate the endless interest and humanity of speech.

(3) We want to awaken their ear to such an extent that they can hear their own speech—an ability which few people of any age possess—and understand its mechanism sufficiently to enable them to modify their own practice to whatever extent they may now or later think fit. In short, we want to give them aural training, without which

even the cleverest exercises are virtually useless.

(4) We want to provide them with speech incentives—reasons and purposes for speaking, and speaking well, which they will appreciate without any urging from us.

(5) We want to diagnose the characteristics of their speech as we find it, to eliminate those which we honestly consider bad, and to put something better in their place.

Many teachers tend to place that last aim first. This is short-sighted—a mistake which puts us in danger of the commonest fault in speech training: of making it too narrow and utilitarian in aim; of letting our work degenerate into mere speech tinkering: of losing sight of the landscape in our preoccupation with the minor weeds. That is not only bad tactics, but also a waste of time; for if we supply children with real motives and interests, and train their ears, countless faults will automatically disappear which would otherwise need hours of exercises to eliminate. That, it may be noted, is one of the most cheering things about successful speech training: its cumulative effect. Working at one thing, we frequently find that we have produced an all-round improvement quite out of proportion to the labour involved, and in advance of our most sanguine hopes.

What has been said above is a plea for keeping a sense of proportion, for not putting the cart and its less desirable luggage before the horse. It is by no means a denial that there is such a thing as bad speech, or that it is one of our chief duties to eliminate it by hook or by crook. “Duties” is not too strong a word, for if we do not cure bad speech before children leave school, it is unlikely

that many of them will be able to do anything about it for themselves later, since speech deafness, like musical tone-deafness, becomes increasingly difficult to eradicate with increasing age and self-consciousness. It is sad to think how many children with good brains are tied to ways of life which are inferior to their abilities, simply because their manner of speech is unacceptable beyond the narrow limits of their own circle.

## Bad Speech and Its Diagnosis

What may justly be called bad speech is generally more common in urban than in rural districts. It is a product of too many conflicting speech influences, reinforced, one would suggest, by urban slickness and complacency. Its chief characteristics are:

(1) A general slovenliness, which manifests itself especially in weak final consonants.

(2) A slick tendency to cut out syllables (e.g. "pertikler" for "particular").

(3) An unwillingness to open the mouth adequately, which results in a thin, pert tone and in the flattening of all the richer vowels and diphthongs.

(4) A tendency to overthicken *l* when final or followed by a consonant.

(5) Inexpressive flatness of intonation, i.e. speech tunes, inflections

(6) A tendency, especially in the southern counties, and chiefly among girls, to give words beginning with a vowel an introductory glottal stop, i.e. click of the throat—an imitating trick which not only sounds affected, but also tends to give false emphasis and to destroy fluent phrasing.

(7) A tendency, also chiefly in the southern counties, to add *r* to any word which ends in an open vowel and is followed by another beginning with a vowel, e.g. "The idear of it!"

It would be absurd to pretend that these faults are confined to the under-educated. Flatness of intonation, for example, is something like a national fault, while even such practised speakers as wireless announcers are by no means guiltless of meaningless glottal stopping and the objectionable intrusive *r*.

Methods of dealing with these defects will be discussed in due course, but it will be useful to deal out of hand with general methods of diagnosis.

Confronted with a new class of children whose speech is the reverse of attractive, one is liable to be appalled by a feeling that there is nothing good about it, that it is bad from root to twig. But that is never true. Even the worst speakers have quite a large number of vowels and consonants well up to standard, and the best way of overcoming a feeling of despair is at once to take note of these, since we can in due course use them as bear-leaders to their less desirable neighbours. The next thing to do is to isolate a few of the worst characteristics, especially in the matter of vowels and diphthongs. Surprisingly, and cheerily often, it will be found upon examination that these are much less numerous than one at first imagined. They merely come so often as to stultify the whole speech effect. Later we shall tactfully fight them with all our skill and ingenuity, and we shall have the pleasure and encouragement of noting how their elimination seems to improve the total speech effect out of all proportion.

There is no need at this point to go into further details. All we need do is to note that inadequate mouth opening is the commonest and most productive of speech faults; that exhortation is singularly ineffective as a weed killer in the garden of speech, and—once again!—that we shall not get the quickest or most permanent results by rushing on to details before laying down a firm foundation of general human interest in speech.

### **Dialect and Bilingualism**

It is an unthinking but not uncommon fault among enthusiastic speech trainers to confuse dialect and vernacular with bad speech. Nothing could be more dangerous. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines dialect as "a form of speech peculiar to a district, class, or person; a subordinate variety of a language with distinguishable vocabulary, pronunciation, or idioms", and vernacular as "the language of one's native country; native, indigenous, not of foreign origin or of learned formation; the language or dialect of the country." These definitions are worth careful thought.

A still simpler definition of dialect would be "an unfashionable and localized type of speech." There are, of course, dialects unpleasing to the ear, but even these have a history. Many dialects, on the other hand, are rich in character and expressiveness. Intrinsically, indeed, some are at least the equals of what is known as Standard English, which has been defined as "a style of speech which may be understood and accepted without active discontent from John o' Groats to Land's End" (Lloyd James: *The Broadcast Word*).

If one is teaching in a district with a well-established and reputable dialect, especially if it is one with which one is unfamiliar, it is at once interesting and good policy to feature it, study its qualities and individualities, sometimes even attempt to speak it under the children's instructions—they love that—and collect specimens of its vocabulary and idiom. Besides giving us something vastly interesting to work upon, this also gratifies children and their parents; for it must be remembered that, far from having killed dialects, as many people predicted that it would, radio has brought speech consciousness and dialect consciousness to countless people who never before considered the matter. Many country people are now proud of the local speech, and wish to retain it. We should respect that desire.

Doing so does not in the least stand in the way of our enabling the children to speak that other and more widely distributed dialect, Standard English. In fact it helps, since it gives us material for contrast and comparison, and the ear training which they involve. Coming from a teacher who has gained the class's confidence, the following argument, which should be put forward at some suitable time, always carries weight.

"I don't know if you have noticed, but in this part of the country we (or you) have a special way of speaking, and a very good way it is. People have been speaking that way for hundreds of years. But if you went to another part of the country and spoke like that, most people would notice it very much. Some silly people would think it 'funny'—but they don't matter. What does matter is that even the sensible

people might find you rather hard to understand. They might even not know the meaning of all sorts of words and sayings which we meet every day about here. That wouldn't be very convenient for you, would it? If you are going to stay at home all your life it doesn't matter; but very likely you will want to travel later on, and it would be useful—wouldn't it?—if you were able to speak in a way that would carry you anywhere. Even M.P.s find that. So we had better begin to learn that other way of speaking now, because you will find it much easier now than if you leave it until later on. Don't think it is difficult, because it isn't. It is amusing to be able to speak in two ways, or even more, especially when you are acting—because it doesn't sound natural if the King talks just the same as the Countryman or the Woodcutter or whoever it is, does it?"

However successful we may be in teaching a new way of speech, we shall almost certainly find that even our most polished pupils drop it at the school door. This bilingualism depresses some teachers acutely. But why? Even if it were important it would be inevitable, since children are only less afraid than grown-up people of being thought "different." And after all, if we have awakened children's ears to such an extent that they can speak at will in two different ways, we have achieved one of our main aims in speech training. We have enabled them really to hear speech—an uncommon ability—and have put them in the way of being able, if and when they feel the necessity, to adopt whatever mode of speech they may consider socially and commercially expedient. In so doing we have done them a permanent service and have suc-

ceeded in the chief job of speech training, which is to awaken normally dormant ears.

### Individual Defects

One very noticeable thing, which incidentally provides a strong argument for their recognition in the curriculum, is the beneficial effect which both speech and dramatic work exercise upon the very average and even backward type of child. It will very often be found that children who can by no stretch of the imagination be called brainy, and who are indeed dull in most classes, blossom when speech and drama are afoot. They are two subjects in which quite a number of backward children do not feel themselves backward at all. The result is a new confidence which, by lessening the sense of inferiority which is too often the main cause of their seeming backwardness, frequently sets them safely upon the road to all-round improvement.

Passing to what may more properly be called defects: one occasionally comes across a child who has some such individual fault as lisping, lallation, or an apparent inability to make certain sounds. These very frequently disappear with general exercises and training, and in the study of particular sounds which we shall later undertake. Frequently there is no physical reason for the defect. The child has merely picked up a wrong sound in infancy, and has no mental conception of the right one or how to make it. More obstinate faults come under the heading of specialist defects, which it is not the purpose of these pages to treat. The necessary information will be found in various books named under the head of "Speech Defects" in the book list given

on page 222. It may be laid down as a general principle that the worst thing to do with a defective speaker is to make him exhibit his defect, however kindly the intention. It should be the rule—and this should be privately and strictly impressed upon the rest of the class—that the matter is not referred to.

This especially applies to stuttering or stammering, a defect which is all the more painful because it commonly afflicts the more intelligent and highly

strung children. The only thing the non-specialist teacher can do is to give it a wide berth, while encouraging the sufferer to take life as easily as possible. Stuttering is a clinical matter, to be tackled only individually and by experts. Strictly speaking, it does not come under the heading of speech training at all, since it is not a defect of speech, but the symptom of a nervous condition for which the only lasting cure lies in physical and mental relaxation.

## CHAPTER TWO

# PREPARING THE GROUND

**P**RECISE methods of introducing speech training will largely depend upon the speech history of the individual class. If they already look upon speech training as an amusing hobby, all we have to do is to avoid spoiling that impression. If speech training is something new, we shall naturally set ourselves to establish that opinion with all possible speed—by no means a difficult thing to do. The real difficulty lies in gaining the interest of those not uncommon classes which have been led by the wrong kind of teaching to regard speech training as unreal, fussy, occasionally embarrassing, and generally boring. Especially with them we shall at first have to confine ourselves strictly to arousing general interest, and banking on the incentives discussed in the next section.

An almost unfailing successful human-interest gambit is to drift into a talk about babies and infants, a subject which engages the attention of practically all fairly young children, boys as well as girls, though they may be less open about it. One may steer in the desired direction by pointing out how amazing is the rate at which babies learn. At first they can do little besides feed, kick and wave their arms, grasp things extraordinarily tightly with their tiny fists, sleep most of the time when they are happy, and squeal when they are not. They cannot even smile. (If this leads to confirmatory anecdotes, so

much the better. Incentives to interested conversation and narrative are prime grist to our mill.)

Next step: "To the outsider, babies' smaller noises all sound more or less alike, but mothers, sisters, and brothers know better. They know that one kind of squeak means 'I am hungry,' whereas a kind of bubbling gurgle means 'I am full—and I like it.' 'I am too full' produces quite another noise, and so does 'I am uncomfortable,' especially if there is a pin in it. Another kind of squeak means 'Pick me up'—and that is when mother looks the other way.

"Has anyone here a small brother or sister? Have you noticed how they learn new useful noises as they go along? It is just like a little dog—you say, 'He would talk if only he could'—and before long baby will be talking. By the time he is two years old he will be able to say quite a lot of things. Nobody has taught him. How has he learned? By imitating people. Perhaps he has been imitating you. I hope you have given him something worth imitating, and not put him back with a lot of baby talk which he will have to unlearn later on. Have you ever noticed the silly way some people talk to babies?" (Gleeful examples—and much excellent propaganda for sensible speech.)

"Before very long your small brother will be able to talk nineteen to the

dozen, as people say. That is wonderful—because speaking is wonderful, when you come to think of it. No animals can do it, except in stories, and only a few birds after a fashion. You and I don't notice how wonderful speech is, because we are so often at it. And yet, when you come to think of it, here have I been talking to you for several minutes, and my tongue has been doing all kinds of clever things, and my lips too, and my Adam's apple has been popping up and down in the most remarkable way, and my jaw as well. You could see all these goings-on, but there were others that you couldn't. My lungs were taking in the breath and sending it up again as required, and the back of my mouth has been having a very lively time—you know: the soft part at the top with that little piece hanging down. Does anyone know what that is called?" (Uvula.)

Even if we get no further in our first talk than this, we have done a good deal. First, and most important, we have drawn attention to the wonder of speech. We have also raised several interesting points, including the inability of animals to speak. At some suitable time it is worth while to discuss the reasons for this: thinness of tongue, heaviness of jaw, lack of flexible lips, etc., for the discussion not only contributes to general interest, but also makes a useful introduction to a study of the speech apparatus. Bird speakers are, of course, also worth discussion, especially as the subject is productive of anecdote. A question to raise is the difference between even the most intelligent parrots' speech and our own, the chief being their inability to vary tone and inflection.

Not the least valuable result of talking

about babies is that it enlists the aid of the younger members of the family, who can be invaluable allies in speech training, especially with younger classes. As such they should be consistently given publicity. Children will readily keep a running record of the things their younger brothers and sisters can say, and those they can't. These last are especially useful as incentive to the study of how various sounds are made.

For example, one may do much at the right time by observing, "It is odd that a smart boy like that small brother of yours says 'falver' instead of 'father.' After all, *th* is not difficult, is it? How do you make it?" Discussion and experiment will quickly lead to some such simple definition as, "You put out the tip of your tongue and bite it a little, and then buzz"—an extremely useful realization in a class where *th* in every position is not firmly established. Obviously the next question would be: "Suppose your brother were old enough to understand, what would you tell him to do to improve his *th*? What does he do wrong?" So in a thoroughly realistic way we have instituted research into voiced and unvoiced *th*, and *v* and *f*. It is hardly necessary to point out that this is speech training of a real and effective kind, being based upon observation, thought, experiment, ear, eye and, above all, interest.

Given space, it would be easy to multiply similar subjects of general speech interest, but that is unnecessary, since anyone capable of engaging children's interest will readily accept the type, find other subjects of the same kind, and make the necessary applications and adaptations to whatever may be in hand at the moment.

Another practice which should be launched as soon as possible is that of getting the children to listen to one another and to note individual characteristics. It is in work of this kind that class courtesy, the importance of which has already been noted, is so essential. With an untrained group it will obviously be fatal to ask one child to read or speak so that the rest of the class may consider and discuss what he looks and sounds like, what are his personal characteristics, and how his total effect might be, if possible, improved. But once the convention of courtesy and—to use a grand term—scientific detachment has been established on a basis of not saying rude things unless you expect to have them said to you in due course, the practice is readily accepted, and children seem to like being anatomized. So, curiously, do older children and adults, once the ice has been broken. And after all, this is not so strange. We are all acutely interested in our looks and effect, hence the age-long popularity of the mirror; and the skilful teacher knows how to exploit such innocent exhibitionism.

A good lead to work of this kind will be found in such observations as this: "They say that no two people in the world are exactly alike, but I have never heard it said that no two voices in the world are exactly alike. I wonder. I expect there are doubles, but they are not common. Take A and B for example"—naming two popular children in the class, preferably among the better speakers. "You might say that their speech is very much alike, and yet I don't suppose we should have the slightest difficulty in telling one from the other if they were both behind a

screen. Let's try." The two children then disappear and take turns in making remarks, the class numbering them on slips of paper and writing the speaker's name by each.

This may be followed by the question, "How could you tell A from B?" Obviously this is much too difficult a question to produce answers which are anything like lucid, exact, or complete, but that does not matter. It will give rise to a number of suggestions which, however disjointed and fumbling, do represent an active attempt to realize and define differences of tone, quality, pitch, articulation, and the like.

Again it is unnecessary to multiply examples. Opportunities for mutual criticism will present themselves quickly enough once the habit is established, especially when acting is afoot. For example, discussions of suitability of individual speech styles to various characters who range up and down the social scale can cover a great deal of useful country.

Ordinarily a child coming from a distant district has a somewhat uncomfortable time in class until familiarity has dulled the impression that his speech is "funny"; but in a class which has been disciplined to courtesy and speech criticism he will be recognized as a boon—something to listen to and analyse—and will go up in his own estimation accordingly.

Especially in schools where wireless is installed, radio voices and speech styles will be found to provide endless material for discussion and comparison. Such questions as, "Why do you like A more than B?" will provoke children to observations and criticisms which are often much more subtle and acute than one would expect. Emphasis should



always be laid upon likes rather than dislikes, and anything like derision should be strictly taboo, since it introduces that element of discourtesy which is exactly what we do not want in speech training. The same applies to discussions of the speech of people met in everyday life—bus conductors, shopkeepers and the like. Amusement, especially where affectations are involved, is in order, but the spirit of amusement is far different from that of acid criticism and ridicule.

Once this friendly spirit has been established, it is safe to offer the children a subject for criticism which is calculated to stimulate any class, whatever the age, to prodigies of delighted diagnosis and description: oneself. Say to the class, "I have discussed your speech often enough. Have you thought about mine? Of course you have, and I think it is time you told me about it. Could you say something useful about my speech offhand?—because my way of speaking is not just like everybody else's, any more than yours is. If I asked you to, could you straight off, now, write down ten points about the way I speak? I don't expect you could, because you are too used to me. So now I will read to you for three minutes, and I want you to listen to me as if you had never heard me before. Then we will discuss me just as politely as we discuss you."

For the inexperienced teacher this requires a certain amount of courage. But it is very much worth while, if only because it brings into the speech class a new spirit of honesty and fellowship which is infinitely productive. Also, it can be privately most instructive. We really do not know much about our own speech—and it is not uncommon to find

that little pitchers have long ears, in this respect as in others.

Here we must leave the general and human aspect of speech, but it need hardly be pointed out that in class practice it should not be dropped once initial interest has been established. It is, and remains, the most productive part of speech training, the leaven in the technical loaf.

### Speech Incentives

The greatest difficulty of visiting speech trainers is that their periods are apt to be backwaters. With general-subject teachers, for whom speech training is a part of normal class routine, this difficulty does not arise, provided that it is recognized that speech training should not be confined to a watertight compartment, that speech periods are pooling times and no more, and that their influence should flow into periods allotted to other subjects. Speech incentives should be provided outside the speech class, occasions for the children to practise speech and to take pride in effective delivery, so that they may come to recognize good speech as a means, not an end.

### DRAMATIC WORK

The power of different incentives varies with individual children. The immensely varied possibilities of what is generally the strongest of all, dramatic work, will be explored elsewhere, but the causes of its effectiveness from the speech point of view may be briefly stated here. Of the various reasons why children tend to give of their best speech in acting, the most obvious is that they are proud of what they are doing. They are so delighted to be

taking a part that they rise to the occasion. Determined that not a word of their part shall be lost, even normal mumbleis speak out. In the same way, recognizing that their speech style should not let the part down, they often do remarkable things in the way of improving their accent and expressiveness. But more than pride is involved: imagination is fired—and the importance of that is not to be underestimated, since there is nothing like imaginative stimulation for lending fire and colour to speech. The whole thing might be summarized by saying that children do their best in acting because they see good reason why they should. They feel that there is purpose in speaking well. The main object of all incentives is to provide just that sense of purpose.

#### SOLO AND TEAM READING

Some children, who have a natural talent and a good ear, feel this sense of purpose in reading aloud. Rightly, they regard solo reading as an art and a rather rare accomplishment. Such children are to be found in most classes, and it is easy to increase their usefulness by appointing them as leaders in team reading, a simple device of which more might be made than generally is. The class is divided into teams of five or six, each with a good reader at the head. Each team is given a suitable prose passage to prepare and to divide among themselves. The leader reads first to set the tone, each of the other members then following suit, and the whole group joining in the last few sentences. Desire to do well for the team stimulates the less-accomplished members to keener effort than they will exert when working alone.

#### SOLO AND CHORAL SPEAKING OF VERSE \*

Some children again—and they are commonly found among the good readers—take pleasure in the speaking of verse, especially verse of their own choice. Much good work may also be done in choral speaking. Such work may be dull on the one hand, or on the other it may be mannered, artificial, and bad. But it may also be good, and then it becomes admirably influential. Everything depends upon the handling—and fortunately there are several really good and practical manuals on the subject, which are named in the book list on page 222.

#### JINGLES

The right jingles are also an incentive, especially when they are in dialogue form, which introduces friendly competition, and most of all when they are enough of tongue twisters to call for conscious dexterity of utterance. Numerous jingles will be found in later sections,† where their individual purpose will be discussed; but it may be pointed out here that the great point of good jingles is that they do more than concentrate upon one or two given speech elements. They appeal by reason of their subject-matter, rhythm and simple humour. Children's sense of humour resides quite considerably in the ear, and the alliterative and repetitive quality of good jingles appeals to it. Children will say such things privately for pleasure, thus putting in much more work than we demand, whereas they will do very little with meaningless repetitions of the

\* For more detailed treatment, see Chapter XII.

† Also see book list and Chapter I, Section One, on the Teaching of Reading

## PREPARING THE GROUND

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*pool-pah-pay* variety. At best they will even take jingles home to try upon parents—and when we reach that stage we can call our work a success.

One other point to be mentioned about the jingles given in later sections is that many of them have more rhythmic freedom than the average poem. They attempt to catch the free rhythms of normal speech; and to overlook this, and allow them to be scanned too strictly, or reduced to singsong, is to destroy them. That is why it is unwise to put jingles to tunes until they have sunk home as speech. It will often be found that children desire to fit a popular jingle with a tune. In fact,

jingles will often be found to provide a powerful incentive to tune making, even with tiny children. This, of course, is to be encouraged, if only because it is good to link the speech class with the singing class. But it should not be encouraged too soon. Every teacher knows that it is almost impossible to get children to speak expressively words which they have first learned in connection with music. Do as we will, a singsong rhythm persists. Remembering this, and not wishing useful jingles to be spoiled, we shall discourage alliance with a tune until the jingle in question is practically done with for speech-class purposes.

## CHAPTER THREE

# PLANNING THE SYLLABUS

### Essential Flexibility

THE greatest difficulty in writing about speech training is that one is forced to comb the subject out into an unnatural orderliness, dividing into neat sections speech elements which in fact and practice cannot be so divided. In the same way one must devote separate chapters to certain speech matters which will, in fact, spill their influence over the whole of our work. Thus the fascinating subject of intonation (speech tunes) is hardly mentioned until late in these pages, whereas in practice it will and should crop up early, and be thereafter kept well in the forefront of our attention, since expressive speech depends so largely and constantly upon its understanding. In the following pages vowels, diphthongs, and consonants are inevitably set out in a certain order. Is it the most logical order? Possibly; possibly not. Is it the best order? No, for the simple reason that there is no best order. The best order for one district is not the best order for another. The best order for one class in a district is not the best order for another class in the same district, or even for another class in the same school.

In other words, it is impossible to lay down a tidy speech-training syllabus which will be valid for all occasions. It is unwise for even the individual teacher to try to plan ahead too precisely. To deal with vowels first, and

then consonants, or vice versa, may appear a tidy system. It is, but it is also absurd. Speech is not like that. Like nature study or newspaper study, speech is of topical and day-to-day interest, and must be treated with appropriate flexibility. We can and must have a clear mental idea of our goal, but as to the precise roads, lanes, and by-paths by which we are to reach it we cannot be sure in advance. All we can do is to take them as they offer, and pursue them for all the interest which lies along them. This will at least save us from lapsing into the kind of academic routine which, however superficially logical, is fatal to effective speech training, since it robs our work of that sense of reality which it is of constant importance for us and our classes to preserve.

At the beginning of every speech and singing period we shall follow what might be called a health routine, and we shall take steps to ensure its popularity; but once these preliminaries are over we shall do our best to conceal any effect of a too set order. We shall, in fact, do our best to make our class constantly feel that here is something fresh, as indeed there will be if our speech work is vital and topical. This freshness is far from difficult to maintain. Indeed, once general interest in speech has been aroused, subjects of interest are so numerous, and are so freely brought up by the children them-

selves, that our difficulty is not so much to find material as to decide what to reject for lack of time.

Bearing in mind what has been said against rigidity of syllabus, the beginner's best plan will be to read through this chapter and Chapter V, which deal with the problem of making a beginning, afterwards reading rapidly through Chapter IV and later sections with a view to making tentative plans as to the order in which, in view of the given class's characteristics, the various speech elements shall be treated.

## Health Routine

Good speech, whatever the dialect, depends primarily upon breathing and resonance; and since for both of them clearness of nose is essential, the first step in our regular routine will be to ensure that desirable condition. Even children from good homes commonly have only the vaguest idea of how to use handkerchiefs in any but the most superficial way, and we shall be lucky if we do not need to give some thorough instruction in that gentle art.

## Nose Blowing

The subject may be introduced in some such way as this: "Have you ever noticed that when you have a cold in your head you feel stuffy when you try to speak or sing? You sound stuffy, too. You know what a bright tone a fiddle has? It would not sound so bright if the hollow wooden part of the fiddle were stuffed with cotton-wool. The wooden part of a fiddle is the fiddler's sound-box. We have a sound-box, too. In fact we have a whole array of sound-boxes. The largest is the mouth. Then comes the nose itself, and

the space behind the back of the mouth (pharynx). There are spaces behind the nose, too. They are quite large, and they need to be clear. There are even spaces round our eyes. If we are to be healthy, and if we are to be good speakers, all those spaces need to be clear and clean all the time. That is why it is a good thing to blow your nose directly you wake in the morning."

Most children's idea of nose clearing is merely to mop the tip. When stimulated to greater effort they are apt to give one violent toot and leave it at that. Such violence is neither adequate nor safe. Gentle persistence is what we want. Children should be encouraged to give a whole series of discreet puffs on each side, afterwards testing the clearness of each nostril by closing the other and breathing gently in and out with lips closed. This thoroughness is not easy to inculcate, and cannot be secured in five minutes. It needs patience, persistence, and time—but it is time well spent.

## BREATHING FOR PLEASURE

After nose blowing there should come two minutes of breathing, and here again we must recognize that most children's ideas about breathing are faulty, and that a good many so-called breathing exercises are calculated to foster them. If we are so unwise as to ask children to take "a good deep breath," we shall probably observe their shoulders and upper chests rise violently and with every evidence of unwanted rigidity. Our first business is to recognize, and get them to recognize, the four principles of good breathing:

(a) that it is such a simple and

natural process that every healthy baby knows all about it;

(b) that what matters is not quantity but comfort;

(c) that rigidity is fatal;

(d) that the happy and contented sigh is the perfect breath.

Effective teaching of breathing depends upon recognition of two facts: (a) that carriage or stance is important, and (b) that effectiveness depends largely upon imaginative approach.

Children should be taught, in physical training periods and elsewhere, that it is important to stand well. The weight should be carried on the balls of the feet, so that we can at any moment rise on the toes without having to change over from the muscles at the back of the legs to those at the front. Finally, the neck should be erect and the shoulders so carried that the weight of the arms falls back and away from the chest. The position is comfortable, natural and the reverse of rigid. A good sitting position is similar to a good standing position: neither rigid on the one hand nor slumping and in-chested on the other.

The same guiding principle of freedom and naturalness should govern our choice of breathing exercises. If there is room for the children to stand for them, they should do so.

*Exercise 1.*—Breathe in lazily through the nose while raising the arms in front of the body to about shoulder height, with hands relaxed and palms down; then exhale with a smart puff through the open mouth, simultaneously dropping the arms loosely. This, like all breathing exercises, should be done rhythmically, preferably in leisurely triple rhythm, since that is the more engaging:

|In :—:—|ha! : : |In :—:—|ha! : : | etc.  
out out

*Exercise 2*—The same, but with the arms rising to the side.

Note that the feeling of comfort and relaxation is important. That is why the arm raising should not be above shoulder level, at least until relaxation has been mastered. Higher raising almost inevitably introduces an element of strain. These exercises are simple, easy and good, but even so we may notice some children dragging in the breath and clenching the jaw. In that case it is better to drop them for the time being, and to depend entirely upon imaginative appeal. Talk about the way we sigh when we are pleased, and what the sensation is, and how pleasant. Another approach is to discuss the way we smell anything we like, for example, flowers; the faintly suspicious sniffs we give when we are not quite sure; and the good way clear-nosed people breathe when asleep.

In fact there is a good deal to be said for dispensing altogether with regular breathing exercises, at least until we are sure that the class's mental attitude is right. We can get the effect we want by spending two minutes in sitting smelling imaginary flowers and indulging in "sleepy breathing" with eyes shut—always assuming that we are *polite breathers* and not *snorers*. Children like such exercises as these, and another good thing about them is that they exert a tranquillizing effect upon fidgety classes. The ultimate effect of such work is to implant in children's minds the idea that free and elastic breathing is not only easy but also physically pleasurable and satisfying—better fun than shallow breathing.

## PLANNING THE SYLLABUS

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Once we get them to realize this, we are on the way to inculcating the habit of good breathing at all times—and it is unnecessary to point out that the importance of this extends beyond the speech class.

### RESONANCE

Resonance work largely depends upon effective use of *m*, *n*, and *ng*, and we shall therefore treat these first among the sounds of English, which it is now time to pass in brief review.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# THE SOUNDS OF SPEECH

ENGLISH speech is made up of:  
 A—vowels and vowel groups  
 (diphthongs and triphthongs);

B—consonants.

In VOWELS the tone stream is shaped by the lips, etc., but not obstructed. Vowels fall naturally into two classes\*: long, which are normally prolonged, or at least prolongable; and short, which are not normally prolonged in standard speech.

voiced, i.e. involving tone (e.g. *m, n, b, v, z*), and voiceless, i.e. involving breath only (e.g. *p, f, ss*).

The following lists, which may be useful for reference, add the usually accepted phonetic symbols, upon the purely optional use of which a note appears at the end of this chapter.

Notes.—(1) The neutral vowel, the last in the second list, normally replaces various vowels in unaccented syllables, e.g. *inglond* (England). One of the

### Vowels

LONG		SHORT	
SYMBOL	EXAMPLES	SYMBOL	EXAMPLES
i:	be, bee, beat	i	it, pity, cities
e	get	u	look, put
u:	do, due, dew, too	ʌ	up
o:	saw, ball, cord	ɒ	on
ɑ:	father, heart	æ	at
ə:	her, heard, bird, fur	ə	the box, cathedral, possess, etc.

In CONSONANTS the breath or tone stream is in some way obstructed by lips, teeth, tongue, or soft palate.

Consonants are of two main kinds\*:

\* Into the other subdivisions of vowels (close, half-close, half-open, open) and of consonants (labial, dental, alveolar, etc.) there is no need to enter here, since such terms serve no purpose in elementary classwork. Those who want them may find them in appropriate manuals, or in the introduction to that invaluable work by Daniel Jones, *An English Pronouncing Dictionary* (Dent).

characteristics of pedantic and too careful speech is to minimize this substitution and to give their face value to such vowels and diphthongs as *mountain*, *sailor*, *particular*. This is not to be encouraged.

(2) *i(t)*, *o(n)*, and the neutral vowel may be said to be the "safest" vowels. The rest give trouble in one district or another, either by distortion or by substitution, or both.



## Diphthongs

Diphthongs (Greek *di* = two + *phthoggos* = voice: double sound) are pairs of vowels united by a glide which is characteristic of English speech. In addition to the five diphthongs given first in the following list, a number of others have grown up as a consequence of the custom of neglecting the consonantal value of the *r* in *-er*, at least when not followed by a vowel.

SYMBOL	EXAMPLES
ei	day, obey, praise
ou	go, know
ai	I, eye, fly
au	now, bough
oi	boy, noise
ie	ear, beer, here
ee	ere, there, bear, bare
oe	four, more
uo	tour, doer

*Notes.*—(1) Except *oy*, which rarely gives considerable trouble, the main diphthongs usually call for much attention. *Oh* may be called the most widely ill-treated sound in the language. Although speakers of certain dialects tend to change the second element of the five main diphthongs, the general difficulty lies in the first element, which bears both the stress and the length. The puzzle is to decide just what sound we want, and what we have in fact got. This is an interesting matter, but it does call for quick ears and a good deal of ingenuity.

(2) The second group of diphthongs are much easier to deal with, because their first element is more easily definable. If we have already got the initial

vowel right, and have eradicated any tendency to thicken the neutral vowel into a burr, the desired result is already achieved.

## Triphthongs

These resemble the second group of diphthongs in that they are the result of adding *er* to a diphthong. Here again, given the right initial diphthong and a safe neutral vowel, we normally experience no difficulty.

SYMBOL	EXAMPLES
eie	player
oue	rower
aie	fire, higher
aeu	our; dower
oie	employer

*Note.*—There is a not uncommon modern tendency to simplify certain diphthongs and triphthongs, especially those ending in *r* when not followed by a vowel. Thus, a chest of drawers becomes a chest of draws, roar becomes raw, even to the extent of turning a roaring lion into a rawing lion (if not lahn). Though these may be inoffensive enough, it seems to the present writer that they border dangerously upon "refinement," and that when the same kind of simplification leads to talk of picking flahz, or sitting for ahz by the fah listening to the wahless, the result is ridiculous.

## Consonants

As few consonants call for special symbols, though not a few call for scrutiny in the speech class, only the following need be listed:

SYMBOL	EXAMPLES
dʒ	<i>judgment, John</i>
ʒ	<i>usual, confusion</i>
j	<i>you, and in new, duke, etc</i>
ŋ	<i>long</i>
θ	<i>thin, myth</i>
ð	<i>then, scythe</i>
ʃ	<i>she</i>
tʃ	<i>cheese, thatch</i>
	(see page 185)

*Note.*—Few consonants except *t* give much difficulty in themselves, though some, especially voiced *th*, tempt poor speakers into substitution, and others in combination, such as *st*, *sts*, and *this*, are calculated to defeat all but the most dexterous speakers. All the same, even such simple consonants as *m*, *b*, and *k* are so valuable for exercising certain speech organs that we shall use them much more than their intrinsic difficulty warrants.

## Phonetic Script?

The word "phonetics" means the study of sounds and how they are made. We shall obviously be doing practical phonetics during a great deal of our speech-training time. But whether or not we make use of phonetic script, or even of isolated symbols, is another matter, since entirely satisfactory results can be achieved without.

It is sometimes argued that they are difficult and that they have an adverse effect upon spelling. The fact is that, far from finding them formidable, children like them, chiefly, one suspects, because they have their uses as a secret code. If one is going to use them, the best way is to introduce them casually one by one, as the sounds for which they stand come up for attention. It

will often be found that children presently ask to be given the whole set for their private use. The thing to impress upon them is that each symbol stands for a given sound and that sound only, whatever the spelling, and that the first thing to do when transcribing a word phonetically is to decide precisely the sounds of which it is made up. Since that calls for analytical listening, which it is our constant aim to encourage, the use of symbols plays directly into our hands.

As for bad spelling, the chief cause of it is that children do not really look at words or consider them in detail. Using symbols not only necessitates consideration, but makes comically plain the differences between orthography and speech which are the bug-bears of English spelling. It is difficult to see how such attention is likely to have any but a good effect upon spelling.

From the teacher's point of view the advantage of unmistakable symbols is that they enable us to show what sound we mean without explanation, and to invent puzzles which, though mild enough, do cause children to listen with the mind's ear. Thus we may write on the blackboard two or three phonetic-script versions of a single word, and ask which one really represents the way we pronounce it.

Symbols are used very sparingly in the following pages. The best way to decide whether or not they shall be extensively used in class is to try them in the simplest way and see how they are received. The matter is raised here not because it is of great importance, but because it is the subject of much discussion and not a little muddled thinking.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# WORKING FOR RESONANCE

**W**E now go on to study some sounds of English and some of their combinations—not all, of course, for even if we needed such detail for elementary classwork, anything like an exhaustive study would require much more space than is here available. This incompleteness is not important, especially since, in speech training as in other things, it is better to cover a moderate amount of ground thoroughly than to attempt too much and be dry and sketchy about it.

### Mirrors

In dealing with every sound we shall try to appeal not only to the imagination and the ear, but also to the eye. The surest way of getting children to watch speech carefully and curiously is to encourage the use of small mirrors. If we can supply these, well and good. If not, the difficulty is not a real one, for it is an unusual class in which every child does not quickly provide itself with a glass of some kind, once they observe the pleasure obtained by the fortunate few who have them to begin with.

### The Idea of Resonance

Having worked through the brief health routine recommended in Chapter III, we pass to what should be the third stage in every speech period. This comprises exercises designed to develop a pleasurable appreciation of free tone

and resonance or ringing tone. This brings us back to the matter of resonance cavities or, as we call them in dealing with children, sound-boxes. Here our aim is to get children to realize the importance of the face in effective speech—and the best way of doing that is by means of the right kind of humming. That being so, the obvious choice for first place among the sounds at our disposal will be what may well be called the most beautiful in any language.

SOUND: *m*. SYMBOL: *m*

Since for a variety of reasons *m* is an exceptionally important sound, it is here treated in detail and at length, partly, for the sake of convenience and clarity, in dialogue form. The treatment may be taken as an example of one method of approach and lesson layout. With modifications it will serve for any consonant or vowel for which a more topical gambit does not present itself. We begin by appealing to the ear plainly and simply by means of a jingle; and since *m* is a peaceful and poetical sound, we choose one which will appeal to the imagination and to a sense of quietness. Plunging straight into the matter with the minimum of introduction, we speak the jingle quietly, prolonging the *m* markedly, first in the middle voice, then higher, and then at such pitch as the class will find most pleasure in sustaining:

*Teacher:* Listen to this jingle, and decide what sound in it is the most striking. When you have decided, write it down, but don't tell anyone till I ask.

1. THE WIND IN THE WIRE

*Listen to the wind in the telegraph wire:*

*M.....*

*Now the sound is rather higher:*

*M.....*

*On it goes by the hour together,  
On through all but windless weather:*

*M.....*

What was the sound?

*Answer:* Em.

*T.:* Don't say "em," say the sound itself. . . . In the jingle I said *m* three times, and each lasted a long while. Did I hum it on the same pitch each time, or did I use two different notes, or three? . . . To make quite sure, listen again. . . . How many notes? . . . Which time was the highest? . . . Which was the lowest? . . . Which was in between? . . . Let's settle on the pitch of each hum, and then we will say it together, bit by bit, as peacefully as can be.

So far we have appealed to the ear and imagination, and we have paid attention to pitch. By one ruse and another we have had the jingle said several times, piecemeal and as a whole, by class and individuals. Probably at least some of the children could already say it correctly or write it down. But that will come better later. First we will teach it entirely through ear and imagination, carefully avoiding any of the "learning by heart" methods, which are apt to produce such direly mechanical results in recitation of the undesirable kind.

Until we are sure that the quality and beauty of the sound are felt we shall do well not to go further; but once we feel safe about that we can come down to mechanics and physical sensation.

*T.:* Let's say a long gentle *m*. . . . You used your breath for that. You used your voice, too. It wasn't like *sh*, where we use no voice, only breath. Make it again: *m*. . . . Did you let your voice come straight out of your mouth as it liked, or did you hinder it in any way?

*A.:* We hindered it.

*T.:* Then *m* must be a consonant. If we hinder the breath in any way, that is a consonant. If we simply let the sound out of the mouth, it is a vowel. How do we hinder the sound in *m*? How do we stop it from sailing straight out of the mouth?—with the tongue? . . . No? What was the tongue doing all the time? Was it curled up in any way, or lying limp and taking a rest? You are not sure? Let's do a long soft hum and notice tongues. Notice if the tip is touching the teeth or not. . . . Well?

*A.:* The tongue was lying loose, with the tip touching the lower front teeth.

*T.:* The tongue was not hindering, then. What was? Was it the teeth? Were they tight shut, or shut but not tightly, or were they a little apart?

Answers will vary, and the point will be made that the teeth may be a little apart or lightly touching, but they certainly should not be clenched.

*T.:* Well, how did you hinder the sound?

*A.:* With the lips.

*T.:* How were they?—tightly closed, or just comfortably closed, or pouted out and pursed?

*A.*: Just comfortably closed.

*T.*: How long could you keep *m* going?

*A.*: As long as the breath lasted.

*T.*: Can we hold on to every consonant like that?

*A.*: No. Some are just pops, like *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, *k*, *g*.

*Exercise 3*—Humming a tune.

*T.*: Let's try holding on *m* to a tune—what we call humming. Notice where you feel the hum—is it in your chest, or your throat, or on your front teeth, or higher up in the face, or where? Take it easily, and don't dive. I will beat time rather lazily, and when I flick my hand for a breath, let your mouth really flop open and just let the breath walk in. You will get plenty that way, and it feels good. . . .

*Notes.*—(1) This idea of letting the breath "walk in" is important. If children get the easy habit of letting in breath *on* the beat and as a part of the rhythm—not just before the beat or just after—their singing and speaking will be improved. Almost all breathing difficulties arise from the false idea that we have to *take* breath. That is the root of noisy breathing and gasping.

(2) Success in humming depends quite largely upon choice of tunes which are at once popular with children and good to hum. To be good for humming, a tune should move about comfortably within an easy compass, and should be free from such series of repeated notes as occur frequently in "Onward, Christian Soldiers." It should also be free from the strong emphasis of such things as "The Men of Harlech," which, though a fine tune, is extremely difficult to hum

with a smooth legato. The trouble with repetition and emphasis is that both encourage throat stressing and jerking the beat, which we do not want.

Fortunately there are plenty of popular tunes which are at once good and hummable. "The Ash Grove" is one, and perhaps the best of all is "Swanee River." Frequent use of such tunes as these is remarkably productive of improved tone.

After the tune, we discuss the physical sensations of humming. In a class of beginners we shall find opinions extremely mixed, partly because some children are humming badly, but more because they have not yet learned to locate the physical sensations of tone. A few will say that they felt the humming chiefly in the throat, many more that they felt it on the teeth, and a few that they felt it higher. Some may even say that they felt their faces full of hum, eyes and all—and that is the idea which we shall encourage, since right thinking is more than half-way to right doing. Three more exercises will help.

*Exercise 4.*—Hum a tune with the lips pursed and loosely thrust forward, the lower lips slightly the more prominent. This is worth doing fairly often, with mirrors in attendance, because it accentuates the feeling of spaciousness in the face and the sensations of forward placing of tone.

*Exercise 5*—Humming into cupped hands. Place the thumb ends just below the cheek bones in front of the ears, arching the hands so that the index fingers meet where nose joins forehead, and bringing the wrists to within about two inches of each other. This does slightly increase the feeling

of resonance, but a more important fact is that the idea of humming to the finger points directs the mind to the right place.

*Exercise 6* has the same object; humming with one index finger resting on the bridge of the nose, or with the two index fingers resting loosely on the sides of the nose and meeting on the bridge. This is good to do occasionally, but not too often, because we do not want to direct the attention too strongly to the visible nose at the expense of the notion of a face full of sound. The bridge of the nose may be a good focus to have in mind, but it is not the whole thing.

Special attention should be paid to the next two exercises, since they are, in the writer's opinion, the most important and effective of speech exercises, whatever the age of the pupil, for the following reasons:

Many people seem to think that easy and absolutely reliable audibility, especially in a large building, is difficult to achieve. It is not. Another common fallacy is that audibility depends upon volume and size of voice. It does not. In fact, when doubtful of one's audibility it is often a good thing to speak more quietly. The habit of audibility—for it is a habit, and not an unduly difficult one to acquire—depends firstly upon resonance, which is the result of easy and natural placing of the tone, and secondly upon the crisp enunciation for which we shall be consistently working. In other words, we need to toss out our tone in a way that will enable it to carry, and to turn it effectively into shapely words. Free and resonant emission of the voice, tone placing as it is called, depends upon

letting the tone out of the throat without driving or pinching, and then letting it up without obstruction into the resonating chambers of the mouth and what we comprehensively call the nose. This is a perfectly natural thing to do. Every healthy small child has the trick of it, hence the carrying power of their tone in spite of its comparative weakness and immaturity. The aim and effect of these two exercises is to turn a natural process into a conscious, pleasurable and dependable habit. One reason why they may be depended upon to do this is that the exercises are rhythmic—this is important. Another is that they are physically pleasurable and exhilarating.

*Exercise 7.*—Beat comfortable threes while treating the words *mine* in this way:

| : : M̄{m̄}.ne. : M̄{m̄}.ne. : M̄{m̄}.ne. : M̄{mine}. : ||

Let the *m* be strong and vibrant, and see that the *i* really joins it, as if it were leaning against the lips and tumbled out when the stop was released. The final *n* should be on the beat, so that it is part of the rhythm, strong but not pedantically exaggerated. If it has real snap, that is enough. Let the children beat time for themselves as they try to toss the sound in a cheerful arch. At first they will almost certainly fail. Some will produce flat and half-hearted words, some will almost certainly detach the vowel from the *m*, trying to put it across by means of throat force, but with practice they will get the trick just as a tennis player gets his swing.

Practise the same thing with initial *n*, and as each new vowel and diphthong comes up, adapt the exercise to it, as far as possible avoiding nonsense

## WORKING FOR RESONANCE

words. For example: main, name; mint; meant, net; must, nut.

Also, when trilled, *r* has been mastered, use such words as ran, run, right.

*Exercise 8*—The same thing adapted to phrases, preferably in triple rhythm, spoken twice or four times without break: e.g.:

| : May we come . in ? : May we come : in ? : ||

Sample phrases: None of you came;  
Running along; Run along home.

Discussing the tone quality of humming is also worth while. For instance, it is good to point out the difference between the rich tone of 'cellos and the thinner tone of violins. Which does humming feel more like? Does it feel wiry, or fat? The loose rich sound of the 'cello is what we want—and if, on hearing this, the younger children are impelled to play imaginary 'cellos, by all means let them, since imagination is our best helper.

This kind of discussion and experiment should not be confined to a single period, of course. More than any other sound, *m* will crop up and call for passing comment in lesson after lesson. In this there is no danger of tedium, since all children like humming. Most of them can do it easily, and most of those who cannot will benefit and improve by trying. The few who find real difficulty in humming are almost certainly beyond our help. The only thing to do for them is to bring their case to the notice of the school doctor.

Occasionally one comes across children who, while having no physical disability, hum with a tight, wiry tone. They should not be let go. We can use them to impress upon the class a

fundamental idea which is revolutionary to all children and not a few adults: that the seat of good speech and its sensation is not the chest or throat, or even the mouth itself, but the whole face. It may or may not be true, as some people argue, that sound does not originate in the larynx but in the facial cavities; but one thing is certain: if we can induce children to regard sound as floating down from the head, and not as being driven up from the throat, we shall do much to save them from the vocal troubles which beset so many, and to keep them out of the abounding ranks of those whose speech, however good the matter, is the reverse of pleasurable to the ear.

### Word Pastimes

So much for tone and resonance, our interest in which must not be allowed to blind us to the importance of associating our chosen sound with words and everyday speech. One or more of the following variants of a single game \* will help us to do this, not only with *m* but with later sounds.

*Exercise 9*.—Ask the class to write down in a given time as many words as they can beginning with *m*, afterwards calling upon individuals to read out their lists. After a few have been heard, ask for other words which have not yet been given. This will cause those who have been waiting patiently to spring to life, concentrating intensely on the word they wish to exhibit, and upon the *m* in it. So much the better

\* Any games involving the spoken word are of value, especially those which concentrate upon a single sound or word type. Writing words down also has its uses, if only because it encourages individual concentration. It is not difficult to find or devise numerous pastimes which will cause children to do a lot of hard work, and yet believe that they are merely amusing themselves.

*Exercise 10.*—The same, but with words ending in *m*. Point out that we are concerned with sound, not spelling. Thus "hymn" and "numb" will count—and be valuable from the spelling point of view.

*Exercise 11.*—Write down words which begin and end with *m*, e.g. mum, maim, mime, minim, muddlesome, meddlesome. This is not so easy as the others, but it is worth while since it induces further concentration on the sound.

*Exercise 12.*—Make up a sentence with as many *m* sounds in it as possible. This is worth playing with every suitable sound. Although they rarely produce anything outstanding at first, not a few children develop surprising facility as they develop an ear. Exceptional examples should be noted in individual speech notebooks, where favourite new jingles should also be copied. Entry should also be made in a Class Speech Anthology, a loose-leaf book beautified with a decorative cover and plenty of illustrations to jingles and so on. Children enjoy using practice material of their own making, especially if it rhymes.

An amusing variant of Exercise 7, which young children will play time after time with suitable initials, begins, "I dreamed that I went to Woolworth's (or some other suitable shop), and the strangest thing had happened. There was nothing there which didn't begin with *m*. It was stacked with *m* things. There was mincemeat, and . . ." Single words are then added by pointing to different children: marbles, mats, mattresses, mousetraps, etc. It is amusing to see children bubbling with concentration upon the sound in question.

These games are additionally useful

to the teacher in that they cause a number of words to be spoken naturally and with enthusiastic urgency. Some may be badly said. Thus Exercise 7 may well produce "umberella," and such words as "mumble" with the *l* badly thickened. Whatever the temptation to hurry into passing correction, it should be resisted. The most one should do is to say the offending word correctly but without comment. To the children the game is the thing, and should be allowed to seem so, even though it is cajoling them into working overtime! The thing to do is to make a note of ill-spoken words for inspection in the kind of talk on "Words which go wrong" which will figure in a later chapter.

## Word Quality

Another useful thing is that word repetition of this kind stimulates children's sense of the character and quiddity of words. Thus they will often laugh suddenly over a word which in a less intensive context would pass unnoticed. The cue should be taken, though not until the game is over. "Aren't words funny?" we say. "And how clever some of them are! You couldn't beat 'hum' for the sound bees make. And 'mumble'—isn't that exactly the sort of noise which mumbles do make? 'Mutter' is another good one. Which do you think is the cleverer: 'mumble' or 'mutter'? . . . There are a lot of specially good *m* words. Think of 'murmur.' You couldn't invent a better word than that for what it means. Say it three times. . . . Can you think of some other good ones?" Obvious choices are 'home, mimic, merry,' and best of all 'remember,' with its rhyming ember months.

It is permissible in such a discussion



as this to cite brilliant and memorable examples from the poets, such as Arnold's "All the live murmur of a summer's day"; Tennyson's

*Myriads of rivulets hurrying through  
the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial  
elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees,*

and one of a dozen examples from that treasury of onomatopoeia, "The Brook," such as:

*I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses.*

But in general it is inadvisable to risk belittling poetry by using it as specialized material for speech training. Better to let jungles stand the practice racket, and spoken poetry show the results.

## Conclusion

The following may be suggested as a means of winding up: "Well, *m* is a beautiful and interesting sound. You would hardly have thought there was so much to talk about in one little sound. We shall come back to *m* often, but now it is time to go to something fresh. Before we do that, let us try to sum up *m* in a sentence or two—what it is like, how it is made, and so on. Write down what you think would be useful, and then we will put the best pieces together to make something to copy into the book."

Something like this would be suitable:

*M* is the humming sound. You can hold it on as long as the breath lasts. It is a peaceful, quiet kind of sound.

To make it we close the lips comfortably, with the teeth loosely together or a

little apart, and the tongue lying limply with the tip touching the lower front teeth. Then we let the sound come up, but as the mouth is closed it has to come out through the nostrils.

## What Ground Have We Covered?

Since this is the first sound we have dealt with, it will be useful and reassuring to look back and summarize what we have achieved to justify such a considerable expenditure of ingenuity, thought and time.

First, from the purely speech-training point of view, we have been laying the foundations of tone production, and building up a series of permanent exercises. These would be useless, if not harmful, done badly. But they will be highly beneficial if done in the right way, and—what is equally important, since idea-less exercises of any kind are of little value—with the right mental conception behind them. Further, we have done something to train the class to listen to a sound and to discriminate between its variations. Incidentally we have drawn passing attention to a number of relevant matters: variations of pitch, the essential difference between vowels and consonants, and between two main types of consonant, continuant and plosive. We have also begun to familiarize the speech works, drawing attention especially to lips and resonance chambers, and to a less degree to teeth and tongue. In short, in the study of one simple sound we have done a considerable amount of fundamental work, in a practical and unacademic way.

And that is not all. We have provided purpose for the kind of examination of words which is the beginning of spelling. We have done our best to

make words live, and to awaken imaginative sensibility to their expressiveness and character and colour—and such awakening can hardly be without its vivifying effect upon composition and the appreciation and speaking of prose and poetry.

Finally, we have encouraged children to concentrate upon a simple human thing, and to come to discriminating decisions about it by means of personal observation, experiment and discussion—surely a real process of education; and all this we have done with the maximum compactness and with no interruption to those other subjects to which speech is germane. In short, one would suggest, we have done enough to justify the argument that speech periods are not merely a reasonable use of time, but essential as a means of economizing it.

We shall not, of course, give such lengthy attention to every sound. Even if we could spare the time, not every consonant asks for it. Not all, for example, are intrinsically beautiful. But, whatever the sound, we shall do what we can to link it with other things and give it a context which will not be literary only. By so doing we shall avoid the speech trainer's greatest pitfall—the danger of becoming theoretic and unreal.

#### SOUND: *n*. SYMBOL: *n*

This consonant need not detain us long, nor do we need much in the way of jingle material for it, since it offers little difficulty, and we shall return to it in connection with short *i* and other vowels.

As with *m*, ask the class to listen for the predominant sound in the jingle:

#### 2. THE DIFFERENCE

*"None" has one more n than "one,"  
Yet what a lot more in one than none!  
If it's a fortune or only a bun,  
I'd very much rather have one than none.*

In passing, note if "only" tends to shed its *l*. If so, mention that it is a notorious trap, and that it will be well to practise it privately in preparation for a jingle which we shall meet later (number 53).

Ask the class if it is possible to hold on *n* like *m*, and then let them sustain a tune to it, with the lips well apart and smiling, and then repeat into cupped hands. At this point it is suitable to introduce a new exercise which will be of constant use to us for purposes of comparison:

#### Exercise 13.—Sound alternation:

d : - : -   s <sub>1</sub> : - : -   d : - : -   s <sub>1</sub> : - : -	
m . . . . . n . . . . . m . . . . . n . . . . .	
d : t <sub>1</sub> : d   r : m : r   d : - : -   s <sub>1</sub> : - : - ✓	
That is the way we sing m . . . . . n . . . . .	
s : - : -   r : - : -   s : - : -   r : - : -	
" . . . . . m . . . . . n . . . . . m . . . . .	
s : f : m   r : d : t <sub>1</sub>   d : - : -   r : - : - ✓	
Now for a still longer n . . . . . m . . . . .	
m : - : - d : - : -   m : - : -   d : - : - ✓	
m . . . . . n . . . . . m . . . . . n . . . . .	
m : - : -   - : - : -   d : - : -   - : - : - ✓	
m . . . . . " . . . . .	

Discuss which of the two sounds is the more pleasant to feel and the more musical to hear. Most will vote for *m*. (This is important only as a ground for comparison of sound and sensation.) And which raises the stronger vibration in the face?

Continuing the comparison: In what ways are *n* and *m* alike? (Both are continuants, and both issue through the nose.) In what way do they look different? Which is the hindering

## WORKING FOR RESONANCE

factor in *n*? (The tongue.) What part of the tongue: tip or back? (Tip) This will provoke talk and experiment, which will lead to the decision that in making *n* the tongue tip is pressed up fairly firmly against the teeth ridge.\* Further discussion will eventually lead to some such definition as this:

*N* is another humming consonant. The mouth is well open, with lips well apart and smiling. The tip of the tongue is pressed against the teeth ridge, and this stops the sound coming out through the mouth, so that it has to pass through the nose.

### Word Lists

Word lists of examples beginning with *n* may produce "enemy" and "anemone"—a pair of similars of a kind which are always worth playing with, especially if they are as rhythmic and vocal as these. They could, for example, be woven into some such sentence as this: "An anemone is either a flower or something we find in rockpools, but an enemy is an angry kind of man whom no one likes."

This could be spoken with index fingers against nose (Exercise 6), the children counting the number of times the nose vibrates (17), and noting the sounds which make it do so (*n*, *n*, *ng*). The idea of the sentence could also be worked up into a prose or verse example of what may be called a thought-twister as distinguished from a tongue-twister; for example:

\* Technical terms should never be used until their meaning is thoroughly understood, and even then only if they serve a permanently useful purpose. The teeth ridge—the ridge where the front teeth join the gum—will be mentioned so often that it will save words to familiarize the term at once.

### 3. ANEMONE

*Anemones are flowers of spring;  
An enemy's a sorry thing.  
In sound, how little difference,  
And yet how far apart in sense!—  
Anemone, an enemy,  
An enemy, anemone.*

Good tongue-twisters are useful in moderation, but one would suggest that thought-twisters, where dexterity depends upon clear thought control, and is impossible without it, are in a higher class.

#### Exercise 14.—Triples.

The word "enemy" may also be used to introduce another permanent exercise which is valuable for producing general dexterity, especially as children like it well enough to practise it for private pleasure:

d <sup>1</sup> :d <sup>1</sup> :d <sup>1</sup> :	t:t:t	l:l:l	s:s:s
en em y	en em y	en em y	en em y
f:f:f	m:m:m	r:r:r	
en em y	en em y	en em y	
d:d:d	:	:	:
en em y			

Some children, more especially in southern counties, and more girls than boys, will want to divide this exercise into eight words, giving a throat chop to each initial *e*. Insist upon the exercise being sung as a single smooth phrase, thus dealing a preliminary blow to the absurd habit of automatic glottal stopping.

Repeat this two or three times, always allowing the rhythmic three beats at the end for breath: see that the children use the whole for breathing, instead of staying suspended until it is time to repeat and then taking a hasty gasp. Practise also on "romany," "memory," and "many men"; also pairs: "many men enemy many men

enemy," and reversed pairs: "many men enemy enemy many men."

SOUND: *ng*. SYMBOL: ɲ

This sound is of especial importance for children suffering from dull tone as a result of an inert soft palate, possibly a relic of earlier adenoids. With this in view we shall use it a good deal by itself, and, later, in combination with *g* and *k*. In most districts it gives no difficulty, except for one regional tendency mentioned below.

The first of the following two jingles will serve to introduce the sound to small children. The second, which presents the same idea in more elaborate form, gives practice in variation and control of speed, in the management of phrases long enough to test the breath, and in letting in fresh supplies without gasping or spoiling the rhythm:

#### 4. THE TWO BELLS

*Little Silver Bell*  
Has a thin bright ring:  
*Ting ting ting ting*  
*Ting ting ting.*  
*Big Bronze Bell*  
Has a deep slow song:  
*Dong . . . dong . . .*  
*Dong.*

#### 5. DING DONG \*

*The little china clock*  
Has a quick brisk chime:  
*Ting ting ting ting*  
*Ting ting ting!*  
*Grandfather clock*  
Takes far more time:  
*Ding dong ding dong*  
*Ding dong ding;*

\* Alternatively this jingle may be saved for use with the vowel *o(n)*, for which a special jingle is not provided.

*While as for the clock*  
*In the grey church tower,*  
*That takes minutes*  
*To sound the hour,*  
*And even then the last slow dong*  
*Hums on the air*  
*So long, so long:*  
*Dong . . . dong . . .*  
*Dong . . . dong . . .*  
*Dong . . . dong . . . dong . . . ,*  
*The last so low*  
*And soft, it seems*  
*The voice of an old clock*  
*Lost in dreams:*  
*Dong . . . .*

Elicit comparisons between *ng*, *m*, and *n* in the same way as between *n* and *m*. Then follow on with listing words which use *ng* internally, finally, and both, asking the children not to include any in which *ng* is followed by *l* or *kl* (e.g. "jingle" and "winkle" These often present special difficulties which will be better left until later). Words like "swing" and "singing" will thus predominate, as they will also if we ask for rhymes with "sing," "gong," "iang," etc. Reading out their lists will give an intensive show to speakers who have the habit, chiefly found in the north-west, of hardening the internal and even the final *g* in such words. This, though vocally a healthy habit and the reverse of slack, is strikingly regional and calls for notice in the districts concerned, though hardly in others. The best way to tackle this and all other regionalisms is to rely upon the tact which is only a kind of honesty and broadmindedness. Point out that "in most parts of the country people do not say 'singer' or 'singing,' although they do say 'finger' and 'linger,' just as everyone everywhere

says 'jungle,' 'wrangle,' 'conger eel,' etc. This is absurdly inconsistent, of course, but there it is—speech is inconsistent. You have only to think of 'bough,' 'through,' 'cough,' 'tough,' etc., to see that. It is useful to know how people in other parts of the country say things, and to be able to say them in that way, if you wish." This leads to the compilation of lists of words in which internal *ng* is and is not given a hard termination, and to attempting such exercises as prolonging *ng* rather softly, and then flowing without *g*-hardening or break into short *n* as in "us." Until they can do so they will find *ng* Triples (Exercise 14) a strenuous puzzle.

A parallel but much less reputable regionalism, chiefly Cockney, is the tendency towards *anythink*, *somethink*, and *nothink*. Here, again, prolonging the *ng* is the method, to give offenders time to hear and feel and consider what is wanted, and to compare it with their own usage. The required sound gives them no difficulty. The trouble is that they think the word wrongly, and must be brought to rethink it. They would not think of saying "sink" for "sing," much less talk of "sinkink a sonk." Point out this inconsistency, which will usually make them laugh, mention that "*somethink*" and "*nothink*" are considered third-rate, and let them practise the word "anything" as a triple and make use of such phrases as these, with each *ng* slightly prolonged:

*Something and nothing are apt to go wrong.*

*You can't get something for nothing.*

*Anything is better than nothing, I think.*

*Some think something, some think nothing.*

The last is the best, since it introduces a slight catch element. This may be developed by giving one child a paper with this or the like written on it: *Some think. Something. Some think. Some think. Something. Something.* Let him read it out in a natural way to the class, who are told to write *k* for each time he says "Some think" and *ng* for each "Something." Such catches are easy to compose and are surprisingly effective, though they rarely trap any but the clumsiest. Their worth lies in the fact that they cause speakers to take care, and listeners to be critical in others of something we wish them to criticize in themselves. And if on occasion the class's scores do show confusion, the speaker will accept the judgment of his peers and be influenced by it to better things.

*Triples.*—Practise on "Singing a-singing a-singing a-singing a-singing a-singing a song," and in the same way with "Swinging a-swinging along" and "Ringing a gong." Even to those who do not harden the *g*, these are not easy, but they are worth time on account of the vigorous exercise they give to the soft palate.

*Sound Alternation* (Exercise 13).—*l-m* and *l-ng*; also in reverse.

*Definition.*—The sound *ng* occurs inside words and finally, but never at the beginning. The lips are well apart and smiling, as for *n*, but the tongue position is quite different. The tip touches the lower front teeth or a little below them, and the back is arched to meet the soft palate. This prevents the sound from coming out through the mouth, and it has to pass out through the nose.

*Ng*, *n*, and *m* are the only three English sounds which come through the nose.

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE APPROACH TO VOWELS

THE three sounds so far dealt with are a safe first choice for every district and type of pupil. They are of fundamental importance in voice training, they are not difficult, they provide openings for the introduction of a number of permanently valuable and adaptable exercises, and children find them considerably entertaining. But the choice of what to take next is less easy. It is time we went on to vowels, and with classes of good speakers, of not markedly regional type, a safe and obvious choice is long *oo*, since it is interesting, valuable for lip training, and easy to observe.

But in various districts it presents difficulties. In some it is virtually a foreign sound, and is replaced by a vowel resembling the French "*du*," "*pure*," etc., while in others, though used freely enough, it is linked up with substitutions for short *oo*. Again, if we are dealing with poor speakers, we are probably by this time so troubled by certain recurrent faults that we feel compelled, logic or no logic, to do something about them without delay.

In most districts the consonant which has the ugliest effect is *l* when final or followed by a consonant. Keeping to our sound principle of postponing immediate frontal attack upon difficulties which may quite possibly right themselves, at least in part, under the influence of general work and frequent passing blows, we shall not attempt to

be immediately comprehensive. All the same, we can try a little skirmishing on the fringes. Our safest plan at the present moment will be to compromise by grouping *l* in its easy position with *i*, an easy vowel which generally has a good influence upon any *l* in its neighbourhood. These may be followed by *aw* and *aw+l*. This is a safe course under poor speech conditions, and will not mean waste of time under good ones. After working through the material dealt with in this chapter, we may expect to see a considerable improvement in what may be called the speech complexion of even the most unpromising class.

SOUND: *l*. SYMBOL: 1

The first thing to realize about *l* is that it has two distinct qualities, thinner before a vowel and thicker finally or before a consonant. Since before a vowel it rarely gives trouble, we shall first concentrate upon this position, with no more than side glances at the other positions, upon which we shall concentrate later.

Of the following two jingles the second is the simpler, except for the fact that the repetition of *l* is enough to tax sluggish tongues more than a little.

6. GULLIVER'S TRAVELS  
*Lemuel Gulliver*  
*Travelled to Lilliput.*

*(Lilliput people  
Live over the sea.)  
He found smaller people  
Were living in Lilliput,  
Smaller than probably  
People could be.  
The knig was no longer  
Than Gulliver's finger  
In Lilliput, Lilliput  
Over the sea.*

#### 7. MOTHER LUCK'S DUCK

*Mother Luck's duck  
Never comes for her grain  
Unless you call "dilly"  
Again and again:  
"Dilly dilly dilly duck!"  
Really what a silly duck!  
"Dilly dilly, silly dilly,  
Silly dilly duck!"*

Four details may be noted in passing.

(1) Is the *l* in "people" and "travelled" unduly thickened? If so, simply correct it in passing, with the comment, "Don't say 'peopaw' (or it may be 'peopoo'), say 'people,'" but do not exaggerate or attempt more at present.

(2) Is the final *y* given its proper short *i* value, or is it sharpened to the full *ee*, a characteristic of some districts? Here again, since we shall be dealing with the matter later, passing comment is enough: "Don't say 'dillee,' say 'dilli.'"

(3) Is the vowel in "duck" open enough, or is it being narrowed to short *oo*? If so: "Don't say 'Mooother Look's dook.' Open the mouth, and say, 'Mother Luck's duck.'" This will do for the moment, as the sound will be dealt with fully in due course.

(4) Is the word "really" given the correct number of syllables, or is it being whittled down to "reelly," a com-

mon solecism? No real difficulty is involved here, since the *l* is followed by a vowel: it is merely that the word has been wrongly learned. In that case it will be well to jump ahead to Jingle Number 19 ("Really!"). But this should wait until the main work of the lesson is complete.

This may be suitably begun by eliciting the statement that *l* is like *m*, *n*, and *ng*, in that it is a continuant. After a tune has been "hummed" to *n*, ask which of the three other continuants *l* looks and feels most like. Children will see that the lip position and mouth opening are identical with *n*, and that the tongue position is not unlike. The question "In which does the tongue feel thinner and more pointed and arched?" will set the class on the track of examination and quite intricate comparisons, from which the conclusion will emerge that *l* causes the tongue to be more pointed and arched, with tip farther forward. The result is a gap on each side through which the sound flows, none passing through the nose.

*Definition*—For *l* before a vowel the lips are well apart and rather smiling, so that they look the same as when we make *n*. The tongue tip is raised too, but is farther forward than for *n*. The tongue is thinner and more arched, so that there is room on each side for the sound to come out. We can hold on *l* just as we can on *m*, *n*, and *ng*, but the sound is quite different because it comes out through the mouth and not through the nose at all. The other three are called nasal sounds because they come out through the nose, but *l* is not a nasal sound.

*Word Lists*.—Confine these to initial *l*, and internal *l* followed by a vowel.

At present bar it finally or followed by a consonant.

*Triples.*—Suitable words are "leveller" and "livelier."

SOUND. *i*(1). SYMBOL: **i**  
(including final *y*)

This lesson, besides concentrating on *i*, revises *ng* and *l* followed by a vowel.

Preliminary comment and question: "So far we have been attending mostly to consonants. Now we go on to a vowel. What is the difference between vowels and consonants? . . ."

"Listen to this jingle, and decide what vowel comes most in it. Perhaps you will notice a consonant too, but that is an old friend."

#### 8. SPRING BIRD SONG

*Sing, sing,  
Bird on the wing,  
Sing of each thing  
That is coming with Spring.*

*Of leaf, bud and blossom  
That April will bring,  
Bird on the wing,  
Sing.*

Discuss the look and sound of *i* in the usual way. This will probably lead to some such definition as this: The vowel *i* is rather a thin little sound. It is not sharp like *ee* or round like *ah* or *aw*. The teeth are just open enough for a finger point to go between them flatways. The lips are spread fairly, but not really smiling. The tongue tip touches the lower front teeth as in all vowels, but quite high up, just behind the top of the teeth.

*Word Lists.*—Ask for words with initial and internal *i* only, not final. Mention the word "children," and the fact that many people say "chooldren."

*Note.*—In their respect for spelling, some children, especially girls, tend to mispronounce "England" and "pretty." Point out that the main vowel should be *i*, and take the opportunity to point out that English spelling is not a reliable guide to pronunciation as, for example, written Italian is. It would be useful if it were, but it isn't. The only guide is educated usage.

*The Value of Final y.*—In initial and internal positions the value of *i* is not difficult to establish, but in some districts we shall need to pay considerable attention to final *y*, and the matter is worth comment in all districts. What we have to contend with is the habit of giving *-y* the value of a very keen *ee*. This is, of course, a good sound in itself, and the substitution is no sign of slackness. The trouble is that final *y* is so frequent that the habit of consistently sharpening it makes it more obtrusive than its importance warrants, and gives a certain thinness to the total speech effect. What we want to do is to induce children to lighten the effect by substituting *i*. This is not quite easy to do. They are quite at home with the *i*, but using it finally is novel enough to be difficult.

Begin with a catch test. Ask the children to copy the sentence "Billy and Willy Hill are twins," and to write down how many *i* sounds come in it. Most children will give four as the answer instead of six. Say, "I should say six, not four," and without further comment launch upon a talk of this kind:

"Would you call *i* at all a difficult sound? . . . And yet French people seem to find it most puzzling. It does not come in their language at all, though *ee* does, and a very sharp *ee*



too. So when they are talking English they have a way of missing out *i* altogether. I suppose the trouble is that *i* is such a thin, light, unimportant kind of little sound. There is nothing much you can get your teeth into, as we say. Now *ee* is another matter. You can get your teeth into that—and it is next-door neighbour to thin little *i*. So when a Frenchman wants to say such a sentence as 'Miss Hill, will you come in quickly?' it is ten to one he won't say that at all. He will say, 'Mees Heel, weel you come in queecklee?' That sounds funny. Why?"

Answers will amount to the fact that it sounds so sharp and thin and pointed. The word "fussy" may also occur. Having established this impression, we are in a strong position to advance upon local usage: "Some people in our own country play that same trick with *y* at the end of words. Whereas most people say 'honey, money, isn't it funny?' they say 'honee, monee, isn't it funnee?' Which do we say in these parts: *ee* or *i*? . . . There is nothing bad about 'honee, monee, isn't it funnee?' of course. It isn't lazy or clumsy, but it does sound odd and sharp, and it makes the ends of words stick out, rather like a little dog with a long thin tail—more tail than dog."

The next step is to provide examples. If they are numerous, striking, and amusing enough, we shall probably settle the matter in hand once and for all—an achievement.

-y Rhymes.—A good way is to ask the class to write lists of words rhyming with "Billy," as numerous as possible—Christian names may be included (Billy, chilly, daffadowndilly, filly, gillie, hilly, lily, Milly, silly, shilly, Tilly, Willy, willy-nilly). Next call on a number of

children to read out their lists, asking them to speak out boldly and rather quickly, stringing the words together as if they were a sentence, and adding that a vote will be taken on each reader as to whether he made -y into *ee* or *i*. Such is the effect of repetition, even upon ears which are usually dull, that the first child who favours *ee* will probably be greeted with a delighted but good-natured laugh.

Another test sentence may follow: "Tilly was picking a sheaf of lilies in Mrs. Dillworth's garden," children counting how many times *i* occurs, and how many times *ee* (10, "Mis." containing two, and 1). This jingle also furnishes material for counting of *i* (15) and *l* (16).

#### 9 LILIES

*Lilies, lilies,  
Fine white lilies,  
Lilies fresh  
As morning dew.  
Ladies, ladies:  
Buy my lilies:  
Lilies, ladies,  
All for you.*

If final *ee* still shows any signs of life, the nonsensical repetitive quality of the following jingle will probably end them, and also set thin-voiced young exhibitionists thinking over the error of their ways.

#### 10. MINNY

*Minny Minny  
In her pummy,  
In her pinny  
Found a pin.  
"Oh!" she squealed,  
"The nasty pin!"  
Really, Minny,  
What a dun!*

*One would think  
That Minny had been  
Speared by horrid  
Savages.  
Really, Minny  
Does sound tinny.  
What a minny  
Minny is!*

SOUND: *aw*. SYMBOL: *o*:

The reason for choosing this as a second vowel is that it is a bold and determinate sound, that it suffers little from mental confusion with any other vowel, that it is apt to have a deleterious effect upon *l* following, that it is in strong contrast to the easy but indeterminate *i*, that it is often poorly and limply said, and that the cause of this defect is easy to define and remove.

To introduce the sound use the first three lines of the following jingle, leaving the remaining seven lines for use later in the lesson:

11. "Caw!"

*"Caw!" say the rooks  
In the tall elm-trees,  
"Caw! Caw! Caw!"  
They don't caw just  
In one set way,  
But according to what  
They have to say:  
"Caw! Caw! Caw..."  
"Caw! Caw! Caw!"  
And so on. Caw!*

It is probable that "Caw" will be boldly said even by children who normally do not open the mouth enough for *aw*, thus reducing it to a muddy cross between long and short *oo*. Exemplify this and ask what makes the difference. (Inadequate mouth opening, probably allied with limpness of the lips.) It may also be worth men-

tioning that one sometimes meets speakers, on the other hand, who open the mouth rather too well for *aw*, making it sound too much like *ah*.

From this discussion the fact will emerge that lip rounding and tension is what produces the characteristic boldness and fullness of *aw*, and definition will be something like this:

"*Aw* is a bold, rich, round vowel, not difficult to make well. The teeth are well apart, as much as for *ah*. The tip of the tongue touches in front but rather low down, and the rest of the tongue is slightly arched. *Aw* has no smile about it. It is a round sound. The great thing about it is the way the lips are well rounded and pushed forward a little. They feel very firm."

*Word Lists.*—These will be the more interesting on account of the various spellings which represent the sound. It will be well to bar words in which *aw* is followed by *l*, unless *l* is in its turn followed by a vowel.

*Sound Alternation.*—Practise this to *l-aw*, with "flaw" and "claw" as the additional words, each with the *l* prolonged.

Also use *aw-l*, with "ball" and "call" as the additional words. It will be interesting to note which quality of *l* the children produce in this: whether the pure initial variety, or the fuller type which is normal finally. Whichever it is, no comment is necessary. The great thing is that they are getting their tongue tips up to it and becoming used to the sensation. This, with children who normally produce a muddy final *l*, is excellent preparation for the work undertaken at the end of the present chapter, and may be found, when the time comes, to have done much to solve the problem for us in advance.

Finally vowel alternation should be introduced: *aw-i*, *baw-i*, *jaw-i*. The fact that these last two are in fact "boy" and "joy" in slow motion need not be mentioned at present. As vowel alternation will later stand us in good stead in the treatment of certain vowel difficulties, it will be well to familiarize the class with it in the present easy form. The reverse alternation *i-aw* may also be tried, but as it is not specially useful it may be by-passed. The similarity to "hec-haw" may prove too great a temptation!

*Intrusive r*.—In districts where the intrusive *r* is rife, alternation of *aw-i* provides us with a stick to beat the slovenly habit. Thus: "Did anyone put *r* between *aw* and *i*? No? The tongue just lay down and took a rest and gave no trouble at all. And yet some people can't seem to say 'I saw it.' They say 'I sawr it,' which is horrible. Even some professional actors and B.B.C. announcers let *r* slide in between vowels in that way—a feeble tick, as if they can't manage their own tongues. Let's practise 'I saw it,' holding on the *aw* and then flowing on to 'it' without a break or chop. See that your tongue lies down." Most children can do that right first time, since the slow motion gives them awareness and control. In the same way practise "I saw him, I saw all of them," "Law and order," and, for contrast, "Four or five," with the *r* recognized as it should be before a vowel.

Then let individuals attempt such a test as "I saw him, I saw it, I saw all of them." In spite of that being made easier by the sense emphasis on the pronoun, some may say "I sawn it," etc., while others will introduce a finicky glottal stop: "I saw 'it," etc. Return to

the alternating exercise and slow motion. Later, try catches like "Don't paw it, please. Don't pour it, please," and persist in one way and another, though not for too long at a time, until intrusive *r* is scotched at least in connection with "saw." "I sawr it" should become a class joke.

*Intonation*.—At this point it will be timely to supply the class with the remaining lines of the jingle, and to use them, in the way suggested in Chapter XII, as an introduction to intonation, the study of which it is time to begin, not only because it is important, but because excursions of this kind help to keep our work realistic and topical. Afterwards we shall return to a matter which in some districts will call for patient concentration:

*aw + l*

The following jingle, which is something of a thought-twister, will test two things: (1) whether the local *aw* is ill-affected by *l* following; and (2) whether *l* after *aw* is as good in its way as in such words as "lily."

12. PAUL

*You can't call Paul small,  
And you can't call Paul tall:  
Neither small Paul  
Nor tall Paul  
Would suit Paul at all.  
Riddle-me-ree:  
What shape can Paul be,  
If he's neither a tall Paul  
Nor small Paul at all?*

In a class of good speakers the *aw* and *l* will be impeccable, and what follows need be mentioned only as a matter of interest. But in many classes a certain muddiness of both vowel and consonant will be observable, even if

the children are saying the jingle in a speech style above their average, as they often do.

The best approach is by means of a talk on the lines of what follows, which incidentally expresses a point of view which children will regard as both just and reassuring:

"Words like 'Paul' and 'ball' and 'called' give some people a lot of trouble. They turn both the vowel and the *l* into something which sounds ugly and muddy. Listen: I will say some words in a special kind of way. I want to know if you think the *l* sounds muddy, or just right, or rather too good to be true." Here say the following words in the southern Irish manner, not specially dwelling upon the *l* but giving it the same value as in "lily": twelve, myself, ourselves, pelting. Children will decide that the result is too good to be true. Continue: "The *l* sounded very nice and pure, just the same as in 'lily,' and as a matter of fact that is how many people do say it in everyday talk, especially in the south of Ireland. The effect is very pleasant, but if ordinary speakers of English do the same thing they sound to be 'putting it on,' and that is bad. We want our speech to sound good, but not too good to be true. Listen while I say two words in a natural way, holding on to the *l* so that you can sum it up. You will notice that there are two kinds of *l*: *lit*, twelve. Which sounded purer? (The first.) Which sounded thicker or 'darker,' as some people call it? (The second.)

"That darkening of *l* is quite all right, but it is easy to overdo it, and that is ugly.

"Some really bad speakers overdo it

until they cut out the *l* altogether and put a kind of vowel in its place. They keep the tongue tip down instead of letting it up, and the result is a sort of muddy *oo* like this . . . very thick and ugly. Say 'lit,' holding on to the *l*. That is easy: we have done it many times. . . . Now hold on to the darker *l* in 'twelve.'" The difference is that in dark *l* the tongue is more arched and slightly tensed: it feels thicker and more muscular.

After practising sustaining the *l* of Paul, all, ball, bill, call, etc., mention that *l* before a consonant, as in twelve, children, old, etc., is made ugly by many bad speakers, and that we shall return to it a good deal as we go on. Then leave the matter.

It will be noticed that no exercise has been suggested for rectifying defective dark *l*. The fact is that no such exercise can be devised, the difference between the two positions being too subtle to be simplified into exercise form. Some teachers, especially elocution teachers, attempt to overcome the difficulty by persuading children to substitute pure *l* for dark, but that gets us nowhere. It is not in accordance with English usage, and children know it, and quite rightly resist. However, the failure to provide a neat exercise does not mean that we have done nothing. We have, in fact, done much. We have saddled an offending sound with an insulting adjective "muddy," and we have set children thinking and analysing sensation and sound. Since thinking is more than half-way to doing, it will not be unusual if, when eventually we tackle *l* + consonant, we find that the anticipated difficulty has disappeared, or at least has been most usefully softened.

## EASY CONSONANTS

NOW that a lesson routine has been established it will be unnecessary, in the following pages, to go into equal detail over every sound which remains to be considered, or to indicate the order in which they should be treated. The great thing is to achieve variety, not concentrating for too long on consonants on the one hand or vowels on the other, and still avoiding the natural tendency to attend too insistently to difficulties. The best thing will be for the teacher to select material now from one chapter, now from another.

How much time will be spent upon a given sound will depend considerably on the age of the class. With young children especially, one often finds that a sound which gives no difficulty is yet worth a good deal of time, either because the children enjoy it, or because it provides lively exercise for one part or other of the speech works; for it must not be overlooked that a great deal of slovenliness in speech, and not only among infants, is due to lack of tone and staying power in the muscles involved. Not less than arms and legs, jaws, lips, soft palates, and tongues need physical training, sometimes even physical jerks.

Whatever the time spent on the sound in hand, and whatever our approach to it, we should cover the same ground:

(a) We should exploit to the full its

interest, both human and vocal, bringing out whatever character it has, whether humorous, poetical, forbidding, or merely utilitarian.

(b) We should be sure that the children unforgettably know the sound and feel of it. As this is the most important thing of all, we shall regularly make use of all relevant devices to encourage aural and oral concentration. If our sound is sustainable, we shall have it sustained to tunes, since there is no better way of getting a sound "into the bones." If it is effectively comparable or contrastable with other sounds, we shall compare and contrast it by means of alternation. With every initial consonant we shall let the class play the game of stringing off lists of words beginning with it, and for every vowel we shall ask for strings of rhymes to be compiled and read out. The fact that these are regarded by children as being rather comical games should not blind us to the fact that they are indispensable aids to concentration, involving the kind of eager repetition which ensures acute hearing and physical awareness. In the same way, we shall invariably make use of children-made sentences bringing in the sound as frequently as possible.

Often we shall use jingles, but not for every sound. Frequently it will be enough to refer back to one already known, concentrating upon it for a new sound, and incidentally revising a sound upon which we have already worked.

(c) We should, in our insistence upon physical awareness, let children work out for themselves, by means of mirror observation, experiment, and discussion, how every sound is made. This may sometimes strike us as being too easy to be worth doing. It isn't. Most children are extraordinarily vague about physical processes. Besides, even if the given sound is child's play for the brighter ones to diagnose, it is always well to give the less bright ones a chance to shine with unaccustomed ease. On the other hand, some sounds are beyond children's ability to diagnose. They should nevertheless be attempted, however conflicting the opinions expressed. Even a mistaken opinion represents an attempt to hear, feel, and visualize the make of a sound, an attempt to achieve awareness—and anything which does that is grist to our mill, since (to repeat what cannot be overstressed) the basis of speech training is ear training.

LETTERS: *b; p*. SYMBOLS: *b; p*

These do not give children difficulty, but since they exercise the lips vigorously, and young children enjoy their explosive quality, they repay considerable use.

Being the voiced and voiceless products of a single mouth position—"twins," as we shall call them—they may be worked in double harness and separated later if either needs separate exercise. The difficult final combinations *pl* and *bl* are given no more than a passing cautionary glance, concentration upon them being reserved till later.

Introduce the two consonants by asking what a consonant is, afterwards inquiring which is the most noticeable in this:

13. BANANAS \*

*Bananas! Bananas!*  
*Buy my ripe big bananas!*  
*All good weight,*  
*None of them straight*  
*Bananas! Buy, buy,*  
*Buy, buy,*  
*Buy my big ripe bananas!*

and in this, in which main stresses are indicated by ' after the chief:

14. THE PUZZLE OF PETER PIPER

*Peter Pi'per picked a*  
*peck' of pickled*  
*pep'pers with a P',*  
*Though why' he picked on*  
*pi'ckled ones is*  
*more' than I can see',*  
*Unless' he was a*  
*pi'geon with a*  
*smooth' and glossy neck',*  
*When he would' go gobbling*  
*pep'pers, even*  
*pi'ckled, by the peck'.*

*Note.*—Tongue-twisterish patter jingles are always popular with children, and often provide useful levers. For example, children will want to rattle away at "Peter Piper," and doubtful speakers should as a favour be allowed to try certain lines as a test. If they show any tendency to glottalize the middle *t* and *p* of "Peter" and "Piper," or to over-darken the *l* of "pickled," or to burr the *-ers*, they should be told that unless they can do something neater than that, the jingle will be put away in cold storage until later. Half-humorous strictures of this kind are the

\* This is the first of a series of imitation market traders' cries. Children like such things, and they are valuable because they encourage resonant "singing out." If possible, they should be practised out of doors, and later on assembled in a market scene.

kind of censoriousness which children understand, and the most unlikely ones will often, for the sake of being given a jingle they like, undertake personal renovations and reforms which save us much work later.

15. PEACHES

*Cheap peaches! Cheap peaches!*  
*Peaches cheap, peaches cheap!*  
*Fine ripe cheap peaches,*  
*Cheap peaches!*

(Apples, grapes, and plums are also apt, but they are kept back for other purposes.)

*Triples.*—Bubbling, toppling, care being taken to give *l* syllabic value; bibbery bobbery; peppery poppery.

Children should work out for themselves that the only difference between *p* and *b* is that *b* "makes a noise" and *p* doesn't, and the terms "voiced" and "voiceless" should be clearly established once and for all.

*Definition.*—*B* looks something like *m*, as the lips are closed, though they are tighter and more pushed out. But in *b* we stop the sound from going out through the nose, so that it has to burst the lips apart—and it does.

*P* is just the same as *b*, except that it has no voice, only breath.

*Character.*—*P* is just a useful little letter, with no character to speak of except a slight absurdity which makes it at home in words like pop, pip, peep, puppy, piffle, and plop, which is worth noting as a little masterpiece of onomatopoeia.

*B* is stronger, and is curiously versatile. It appears in numerous pleasant words like "beautiful" and "bell"; in a number of exhibitionist words like banner, bugle, blow, and blaze, and

with increased force in so many formidable words like beat, bang, blast, bore, boom, bogie, and bogle \* as to make it obvious that its quality appealed to the imagination of primitive word makers only less than that of the still more formidable *g*.

Note bubble, babel, and babble as clever imitative words.

Note the frequency of *b* and *p* and *m* in words associated with babyhood, those being the first "letters" which babies attempt—the most natural sounds, as they may be called. Variants of "mama" and "papa" appear in many languages, ancient and modern, probably in all, and for an obvious reason: those being babies' first "words," proud parents through the ages have appropriated them to themselves. Note that "Pope" is a form of "papa."

*Note.*—An interesting passing comment on *p* is that the sound does not occur in Arabic, just as the *loch* value of *ch* does not occur in English, though it used to. Arabic learners of English tend to substitute *b*, which produces some curious mispronunciations, of which children will be amused to invent specimens.

Soft Palate

The statement that in making *b* we stop the sound from coming out through the nose prompts the question, how do we do so? This brings us to the soft palate. Children should

\* It is important to remember that not a few children are more sensitive to evocative words and sounds than is commonly realized, especially when their attention has been drawn to the matter. While dwelling frequently upon beautiful and amusing words, it is advisable to soft-pedal the other kind, since it is possible for the mind of a sensitive child to be haunted by an ugly word.

examine it and the uvula, and notice how vigorously we contract it when swallowing, and stretch it when yawning, especially a polite yawn with the lips closed. We also stretch and raise it moderately when smiling. That is why a smiling position of the face is conducive to bright tone in speaking and singing. These observations lead to the explanation that the soft palate is a valve or flap which we use to open or close the passage from throat to nose. When we are breathing in through the nose the soft palate droops loosely, but most of the time when speaking we keep it up, allowing it to slip only to let out *m*, *n*, *ng*. This is a remarkable activity, and should be featured as such.

Unfortunately, people whose palate is cleft, or the back wall of whose palate is weighed down with adenoids, cannot manipulate the palate adequately, with the result that sound is escaping all the time through the nose, producing the characteristic nasal adenoidal or cleft-palate tone. Not infrequently—and here we come into the range of practical politics—people who have been successfully treated for palatal or adenoidal trouble still need to learn to use their palate effectively, and most people's voices are improved by greater liveliness in that department. The following exercises, together with others given later, are therefore worth while:

*Exercise 15.*—Keep the lips tightly closed from beginning to end of *pm pm pm* said a dozen times or more, like the word "poin" with the vowel omitted. This will be felt to jerk the soft palate fairly vigorously. The exercise is difficult to explain on paper, but not difficult to do, once one has got the children out of breaking the series into separate "words."

*Exercise 16.*—The same with *bm*. This is naturally more noisy and booming, and exercises the palate still more strongly.

LETTERS: *f*, *ph*; *v*. SYMBOLS: *f*; *v*

This is another easy pair of twins. They may be touched upon lightly now, and returned to if necessary when we come to the more difficult *th* pair. No jingle material is necessary here; such an exhibition phrase as "Look at this violin! What a fine violin it is!" will serve adequately for introductory material, exhibition sentences being used for such practice as is done.

*Alternation.*—Let the children practice sustaining *f-v-f-v*, changing without break from unvoice to voice. They may find it difficult at first to do this without breaks, but they will soon master the trick, which will come in useful later.

*Sustaining.*—Have a short smooth tune sustained on *v*, so that its quality and the vibration of the lower lip can be felt.

*Triples.*—Funnily, verily, violet (which will help to counteract this word's common tendency to become a "vi'let" or even a "voylit").

*Description.*—To make *v* we draw the lower lip in a little, bite on it with the upper front teeth, and then make a sound, stopping it from going out through the nose by means of the soft palate. The sound has then to come out through the teeth in a strong buzz.

*F* is just the same as *v*, but with no sound to it.

LETTERS: *s*, *ss*, *sc*, *c*, *ce*; *z*, *s* (final).

SYMBOLS: *s*; *z*

This pair give no normal difficulty, and call for no jingle material. Lipping



is rarely a real disability, except during the temporary absence of front teeth. More often it is the result of thinking the sound wrongly, and is overcome by closing the teeth firmly and keeping the tongue tip down—matters which will be covered in working for definition.

*Definition.*—To make *s* we close the teeth firmly and blow through them. The tip of the tongue keeps well down and out of the way. If we do not close the teeth firmly, and if we let the tongue tip slip upwards, we lisp, making a kind of *th* instead of *s*.

*Z* is the same as *s*, except that it is voiced.

*Sustaining.*—Sustain a short tune on *z*, to examine the sensation.

*Alternation.*—Practise voicing and unvoicing *z*-*s*, as for *f*-*v*.

*Triples.*—Summery (revising final *y*), rustling (giving syllabic value to *l* again and revising final *ng*), lazily (useful for *l* and final *y*).

*Character.*—*S* is a versatile sound, much used in imitative words. If not forceful, it is gently expressive, as in sigh, whisper, softly. If made strongly, it is formidable, as in "hiss" and the dreadful sound of hissing.

*Z* has not this formidable quality, and is a fat, humorous sound used in imitative words like buzz, whizz, and zoom.

*Note.*—There is room for interesting comment upon the extreme freedom of our interpretation of the letter *s*. We always keep it voiceless initially, but voice it internally between vowels: rises, phases, vases, roses. The unvoiced *s* between vowels is indicated by *ss* or *c*: passes, races. At the end of words we use voiceless *s* after voiceless consonants, e.g. hats, cliffs, months, fifths (two difficult words), but give it *z* value after a vowel: houses, races, tries, his,

hers, etc. (And yet we say "Yes," never "Yez"! ) It is also voiced finally after voiced consonants, roads, cabs, halves, etc. This seems to give English people no trouble, but it must puzzle foreigners. Some never attempt to voice final *s*, for example in plurals—a tiny point and not obvious to detect. Yet, occurring so frequently, it is enough to make the whole effect exotic.

Another interesting point is the use of *c* for *s*, leading to the point the letter *c* has no value of its own: it always represents either *s* or *k*, and is one of the superfluous letters of the alphabet. That is why the letter *c* has no place in phonetic script.

LETTERS: *sh* (discussion, fusion).

SYMBOLS: *ʃ*, *ʒ*

This pair can be briefly dismissed in connection with *s* and *z*, and can be joined to the mention of *c* being a superfluous letter. Make the sound *sh*, and ask whether it is a single sound or, as the fact of its being represented by two letters would suggest, two sounds following. The deciding factor is whether it is the result of a single mouth position or of one position followed by another. Children will quickly decide that it is a single, which brings us to the curious fact that here is a frequent single sound without a single letter in the alphabet to represent it.

Next mention that some tiny children cannot manage *sh*. For example, they say "sip" for "ship." What do they fail to do?—to push the lips firmly forward. This, with alternation of *s*—*sh*—*s*—*sh*, leads easily to the beginning of what would appear at first sight to be a somewhat difficult definition.

*Definition.*—To make *sh* we do exactly the same as for *s*, but we also

push the lips forward so that the hiss has to come out through a funnel. The sound can be made with the teeth a little apart, but wider parting alters the sound.

Next ask the class to sustain *sh* and then add voice. What letter stands for that? They will not know, which is not surprising, because, although the sound is a single and is not uncommon, we have no letter for it—another hole in the alphabet. Some children will not even have recognized that English included such a sound. In French it is represented by *j* or *ge* as in "*juger*," but in English we have made *j* = soft *g*. Let them experience the sound and position by sustaining the internal consonant of "*usual*," and then practise voiceless-voiced alternation in the usual way. Sustaining on the voiced consonant is possible but not necessary.

*Triples.*—Fisherman, usual. The latter will cure the not uncommon tendency to reduce the word to two syllables by omitting the second *u*. In the same way, "*usually*" is frequently reduced to three syllables or even two, and it may be useful for once to turn triples into quadruples for the sake of practising the word. Anything is worth while which was against the habit, almost exclusively characteristic of slick town speech, of clipping out unaccented syllables. In passing, one may also deride the popular "*akshly*" for "*actually*."

*Character.*—Like *s*, *sh* varies in character according to the force behind it. Gentle, it has a certain mildly descriptive quality: shiver, shimmer. Stronger, it makes an effect in a few words like "*swish*" and "*rush*." The voiced consonant, never being used

initially or finally, has no chance to express much. But it is such a curious and rich sound that one feels that it might have expressed a good deal had it been given the opportunity.

LETTERS: *t* (initially), *d*. SYMBOLS: *t*, *d*

Although *t* rarely gives much difficulty initially, it is capable of being so troublesome in other positions that the only thing is to attend to it early, and work it steadily in preparation for attacking its difficulties later with maximum force. For this reason more jingles, here and later, are allotted to *t* than to any other letter. In classes where the sound gives no trouble the majority of them may be ignored, or used for the sake of other sounds with which the *t* is tied up.

The first thing to realize is that the difficulty with *t* is not physical. The sound is as easy to make finally and internally as initially, and internally between vowels as elsewhere, no subtle modification being involved, as with *l*. It is merely as if poor speakers in some districts, and not only poor speakers in others, had for some obscure reason decided that, while using *t* initially, they would otherwise discard it, using a glottal stop instead, even in contexts which render this replacement extremely difficult. But regional habits of this kind may be extraordinarily tenacious and difficult to attack successfully, and are not to be eradicated in one lesson or two. The only thing to do is to give a thorough grounding in the difficult sound in an easy position if, like *t*, it has one, and then to attack it persistently in more difficult contexts. The great thing is to get the sound thought over thoroughly—and that will be our first step with *t*.

First of all, we shall try to concentrate inquisitive attention upon the tip of the tongue, incorrect action of which is the cause of *t* difficulties. In so doing we incidentally get on the track of *t* lispers, the only people who give trouble with initial *t*. They are usually feminine.

To begin with, write on the blackboard the words "Tea for two," and comment: "You would think the two tees in those words were exactly alike, but they are not. We don't make the letter tee in just the same way before *ee* as before *oo*. There is very little difference—it is a question of just where the tongue tip touches up to the teeth ridge—and it is difficult to spot; but there is no harm in trying. Say the sentence over to yourself quietly and try to *see* the tongue position in your mind's eye. Mirrors won't help you much." In short, put them on their mettle and leave them to experiment.

Eventually, after discussion which should not be cut short, the decision will be reached that when followed by *ee* or any other thin (front) vowel, the tongue tip comes almost as far forward as the junction of the teeth with the ridge, while before back vowels the tip curls up more and touches quite a quarter of an inch farther back.

It is worth while to prolong this discussion. Thus, after writing on the blackboard, "*T-t-t!*" said the old lady crossly: "Have you ever seen that kind of thing in a book? What does it mean?" The class responds suitably. "Right—but do you think tee-tee-tee is really an exact way of writing it? Is it *t* at all? Try quietly." They will decide that it isn't. the tongue tip goes farther forward and is then sucked at until it gives way in a kind of cross be-

tween *t* and *th*, for which we have no letter. (All of which, of course, is quite "useless," except that it promotes a remarkable amount of experiment and observation of the tongue.)

Again: "It is odd how the same letter is said in different ways in different languages. When a Frenchman says 'tout' (*tu*)—that means 'all'—or 'thé' (*te*)—that's tea to drink—or 'Tais-toi, ma petite,' *te twa, ma pəti:t*—that's 'Be quiet, my little one' if it is a girl, or *te twa, mō pəti*: if it's a boy, he puts his tongue tip a quarter of an inch farther back still, right round at the back of the teeth ridge. Try saying *tu*, like a Frenchman, and feel the difference."

Next have the tongue position examined in: do, dead, dear. Does the position of the tip vary there as in: too, Ted, tear? The answer is "No."

By this time we are ready for diagnosis.

*Definition.*—To make *t* we press the tongue tip against the teeth ridge and snap it down. In words like "tea" and "tip," the tongue tip slides a little nearer the teeth than in words like "too" and "top" and "tongue."

*D* is the same as the second kind of *t*, except that it is voiced. The vowel following makes no difference to where the tongue tip touches.

*Alternation.*—Say *t-d-t-d* (*tə-də-tə-də*) and the reverse.

*Triplet.*—Tumbling (with syllabic value for *h*), doddering. Also try totally, tittering, but if the internal *t* is faulty, drop the matter without comment and leave it until later.

*Soft Palate.*—Repeat *tn-tn* (as in Exercises 15 and 16)—as when we say "button" in the normal way, the vowel between *t* and *n* disappearing. The

tongue tip should be pressed firmly against the teeth ridge throughout.

The same, rather slower at first, for *dn*, which has a more powerful effect.

Before committing the class to practice material it is advisable, if there is any suspicion of lisping, to return to the tongue tip: "You noticed how the tongue tip slid farther forward for 'tea.' That is quite natural and right unless it is overdone. But some people do overdo it. They let the tongue tip come almost between the teeth: 'Tell me when it's tea-time, Tommy.' They seem to think it sounds rather dainty, but it sounds frightfully silly to me."

Jingles follow. They have been held back this time until late in the lesson, on the principle that it is waste of time to use practice material until the foundations for its proper performance have been soundly laid. In the first one, *t* is almost entirely initial. It may be advisable to anticipate "waitress," "eight," and "mostly," in which, as always before *l*, the *t* is apt to disappear, by having them said with a long enough *t* stop for the tongue position to be appreciated.

#### 16. TEA FOR TWO

"Tea for two,"  
The waitress says,  
"Tea for two,  
Tea for two,"  
Sometimes more,  
And now and then  
"Tea for eight"  
Or "Tea for ten";  
But mostly it is  
"Tea for two,  
Tea for two,  
Tea for two."

In the same way, before attempting the next, practise long-stopping the *t*

in several places. In such things as "got time" there is no need for exaggeration: "gotta time," a favourite bad-elocution trick, is too much of a good thing: one good *t* shared between the two words is a normal and adequate ration. "Starting" is not likely to give trouble, but in "matter" and "quarter" we are in really difficult internal *t* country, and if we make them safe we shall have done quite enough preparatory work to go on with.

#### 17. TEN TO TWO

*At ten to two the bell begins:*

*"Ten to two,*

*Ten to two!*

*Time you were starting, now:*

*Ten to two!*

*Ten to two,*

*Ten to two.*

*No matter what*

*You are wanting to do,*

*You haven't got time for it:*

*Ten to two!"*

*Sometimes it starts*

*At a quarter to two,*

*But always it tinkles*

*The same to you:*

*"Ten to two,*

*Ten to two!*

*Time you were starting, now:*

*Ten to two!*

*Ten to two,*

*Ten to two,*

*Ten . . . . . to two."*

Initial *t* will be again extensively practised in jingle 22.

*Character.*—Here there is little worth discussing. *T* is a very frequent letter indeed, and *d* is a good solid consonant—that is about all there is to say. It may be worth mentioning, since it is so

often heard at the pictures, that many Americans have a way of turning final *t* into *d*, so that "Right away" becomes "Ride away."

*Lisping* of the affected or sloppy kind usually corrects itself with remarkable speed when it sees danger of becoming an object of ridicule. More persistent cases are usually the outcome of a habit of infancy, and can be cured by making the lisper practise repeating *t* and *t* words with the tongue tip exaggeratedly back, in the French manner. Occasionally one comes across a child with an overlarge tongue; the same type of exercise will help him to minimize the effect of his disability, though complete cure is hardly to be expected. (It is encouraging to notice, however, that not a few allegedly large tongues are really no more than ill controlled, and improve remarkably as a result of thought, encouragement, and practice.)

LETTERS: *ch*, *tch*, *j* (judge, general),  
SYMBOLS: *tʃ*; *dʒ*

These follow naturally after the *sh* pair and *t*, and are worth using for discussion and diagnosis. They may then be left, since they give no difficulty. Refer back to the "Cheap Peaches" jingle (page 179), asking what consonant is frequent as well as *p*. Let the children make the sound *ch* and then *sh*. How are they different? Most children will say that *ch* is "harder," and some will notice that we always snap it short, never sustaining it. Go on as for *sh*, by asking whether *ch* is a single or a double. Most will say at first that it is a single, but slow motioning will change their opinion, and lead them, though not without some difficulty and a good deal of quite worthwhile experiment

and observation, to the right rather subtle half of the definition.

*Definition*.—To make *ch* we begin with *t* and change suddenly to *sh*, shooting the lips out and snapping down the tip of the tongue.

Next ask for voice to be added to *tch*, resulting in what is known as soft *g*, and for how we represent the sound in writing. Eventually add the remainder of the definition:

For soft *g* we do just the same as for *ch* except that we use voice. That gives *d* for the first part. The second part is the sound in "usual," for which we have no special letter.

*Alternation*.—Practise *ch-ge* in the usual way.

*Triples*.—General, jingling (with syllabic *l*), jovial, cheerfully.

*Sustaining* is impossible. Say so and ask why, eliciting the fact that *ch* and *dge* are not complete without the explosion in which they conclude.

After this let the children manufacture themselves a new jingle by substituting "juicy" for "cheap" in the "Peach" jingle, thus also bringing up final *y* again. "Juicy oranges" will also serve.

*Character*.—*Ch* is rather a ridiculous sound, and is of frequent occurrence in short words like chip, chop, chirp. Soft *g* is a sound of richness and character, yet it seems to occur in few outstandingly descriptive words.

LETTER: *h*. SYMBOL: *h*

Though its omissions and intrusions are still stock material for comedians, and though not a few grown-up people seem to be unsafe about it, *h* gives few modern children any difficulty. Just as the substitution of *w* for *v*, so com-

mon in Sam Weller's time, has completely died out, so *h* difficulties seem to have gone into a decline. If in some classes the letter tends to be omitted, discussion should do much to put it right, and special practice will be found in jingles 23 and 29. Exhibition sentences will also be useful, but they should not be made until the rule of *h* (see below) has been thought over; for though children will indulge in *h* exaggerations for fun, they will not—and quite rightly—incorporate them into their usage.

To introduce the sound, ask the class to listen to a sigh, to supply a letter for it, and then to make the sound for themselves. Which is it: consonant or vowel? . . . Consonant? But the breath was not hindered in any way . . . Vowel? But there was no voice. *H* is like a vowel in having no breath hindrance, but unlike a vowel in having no voice: it is something of each, and is usually called the half-vowel or semi-vowel.

*Definition.*—To make *h* we simply breathe out through the open mouth without sound.

*Discussion.*—Have *h* made again, slightly at length, and vowels attached to it: high, hoo, etc. "Is that at all difficult? . . . No. Yet most foreigners find it very difficult indeed, and very surprising. That is because there is no breath leak like that in their languages, and they simply can't believe it, as it were. *H* is an uncommon thing, and really not a good thing either—a waste escape of breath like that. Perhaps one day it will die out of English, and it will be no loss. But till that happens we need to say it in the right places—because a thing that good speakers simply never do is to drop *h* out where

it ought to be in, or drop it in where it ought to be out. That brings us to an important question: how often ought we to breathe *h*. When must we put it in and when can we forget it?"

That also brings us, as teachers, to the fact that more nonsense, and some of it precious nonsense, is talked about *h* than about any other letter in the language. Many people seem to take the stand that we ought to sound every *h* every time, with the exception of the regular silent ones. If we do so, we shall certainly sound remarkably pedantic, not to say hiccupping, in such a sentence as "He and his mother had had half of his house turned into a flat."

*The Rule of h*—that is, the normal usage of unpedantic educated speakers, which we must bring home to our classes—is that the *h* of accented and important words is always sounded, but that unaccented ones, especially of unimportant pronouns and possessive adjectives, tend to lose it. To be more precise in detail: *h* at the beginning of a sentence is always sounded, at least slightly, and when we meet a pair of unimportant particles like "had had" we allow a very moderate aspiration to the second. Thus in the given sentence the normal aspiration is "He and his mother had *had* half of his house turned into a flat"—out of seven *h*'s we aspirate three fully, one slightly, and three not at all; which is about average.

Similarly, in "He hadna gone a league, a league" the metre compels us to aspirate the second *h* fully, but the first, though beginning the sentence, is very little noticed; but if we were saying "He had hardly gone a league" we should aspirate the third *h* fully, the first moderately, and the second not at all. In many sentences *h* depends

upon shade of sense. Thus in "How had he handled it?" we shall normally aspirate the first and fourth, but not the other two; whereas if we individualize *him*: "How had *he* handled it?" we shall aspirate the third as well.

In formal speaking, especially at slow speeds and with marked emphasis, we naturally give *h* an increased showing, but in ordinary circumstances fifty-fifty may be taken as a fair average.

These subtleties will naturally not be brought up in class, but they are worth our consideration, since clear and honest thinking is important in speech training as in other branches of teaching. It will guide us through another question, which gives rise to much excited discussion and to occasional bursts of newspaper correspondence:

*The h in "Where," etc.*—The usual argument of its advocates is that *h* was regularly sounded in mediaeval English in "which," etc., as is indicated by the spelling "*hwile*." The probability is that in some districts it was, and in others not. In any case, there is remarkably little correspondence between mediaeval and modern pronunciation. The fact that the *k* and *gh* of "knight" were both given full consonantal value does not say that we should recognize them now, except in writing. Those who sedulously honour the *h* in which, why, where, and when are apt to argue that its omission is ill bred. The fact here would seem to be that in the north it comes natural, but that in the south it is acquired, often under the impression that it is eminently refined. The best rule would seem to be that if one has the habit of sounding *h* in these words, one should

keep it; but if not, there is no need to acquire it.

A relevant argument is that since *h* is vocally a misfortune, being unconverted breath, it might well be honoured in the breach where usage allows the option. Another is that since the letter has little character and almost no descriptive force, there is no reason to make a fetish of it. Its prestige is almost entirely lost.

Out of all this the fact emerges that in class we shall merely note whether *h* is used adequately to satisfy normal usage, point out that in some words, such as *hour*, *honour*, and *hein*, which are chiefly of French origin, it is not sounded—so that the article is "an" and not "a"—and leave it at that.

LETTERS: *g, k, ck, c, q*. SYMBOLS: *g; k*

These are worth practising because they exercise the soft palate, but as they give no intrinsic difficulty, they need not be dwelt upon for their own sake.

*Definition.*—To make *k* we harden our tongue and raise it so that it joins with the soft palate to stop up the back of the mouth until the breath bursts through.

Hard *g* is the same but is voiced.

*Alternation and Repetition.*—*G-k*—*g-k* is worth using regularly where soft palates lack vigour, and it is worth while to let the class list words beginning and ending with these consonants, e.g. *gig, gag, grog, grig, kick, cock, cog, keg, clog*, also to be used for exercise.

*Character.*—An apt question to follow the reading out of these lists is "Should you call those pretty sounds?" The answer will be "No," and this will lead to the decision that their charac-

teristic quality is not beauty but bludgeoning force. This, which is truer of *g* than of *k*, no doubt accounts for the presence of *g* not only in the word "ugly"—an ugly word!—but in a number of words to which it applies.

*Triples*.—Glittering, gathering (if the *th* is above suspicion); cantering, conquering, cackling, tickling.

*Soft Palate*.—Say "Pink ink" briskly and repeatedly.

Repeat *kng* ("king" minus the vowel) with the least possible movement of the palate; the effect can be strongly felt in the nose.

The same for *gng* (as in "gong"), which is very powerful indeed.

#### LETTER: *w*. SYMBOL: *W*

This should be taken in connection with long *oo*. Though it normally gives no trouble, it is worth frequent use, because it is excellent lip exercise.

Let the children rest a little finger on the middle of the lower lip, nail vertical, purse the lips round it, and snap them apart. What letter represents that? Do the same thing again, paying attention to keeping the teeth as far apart as is convenient.

*Definition*.—*W* is very much like the vowel *oo*. To make it we round the lips tightly as if we were going to whistle, and then snap them apart. *W* can be voiced or voiceless.

*Triples*.—One or other of these words should be used in practically every lesson: wonderful, wondering, wandering, wanderer.

*Practice Material*.—Lewis Carroll has provided the perfect *w* jingle in "The Lobster Quadrille," especially the refrain lines:

*Will you, won't you,  
Will you, won't you,  
Will you join the dance?  
Will you, won't you,  
Will you, won't you,  
Won't you join the dance?*

See also jingle 26.

*Wh*.—The question of *w* in connection with *h* (where, why, etc.) has already been discussed under *h*.

*Character*.—*W* is a popular consonant, because it is so neat and amusing to feel and look at. It is of frequent occurrence in words which are full of character and often amusing, yet one feels that *w* derives quality rather through association with the vowel than on its own account. The best thing is to point out to the class that *w* words are worth collecting, and to discuss their finds: wink, wrinkle, and twinkle are sure to be included as real and amusing finds—and they are.

A *point of interest* is that *w* occurs in wring, wrung, wrist, wrinkle, wiggle, wrong—a whole group of words denoting twisting, but that it is no longer sounded in them. If and when it was, it certainly added to their descriptive effect. But it is difficult to tie up with another consonant in that way, which is probably why it has survived only as a spelling relic.

#### LETTERS: *y, i*. SYMBOL: *j*

This is another consonant which has, as it were, no separate existence or interest apart from its connection with vowels, and it will be most usefully studied in connection with long *oo*.

All that need be done in passing is to mention that letter *y* stands for either a vowel (as in myth, lych-gate, mystery)—which will give excuse for a passing glance at the pity-Kitty group



—or for a consonant which is puzzling to define. Though definition in this case is not useful in itself, it is worth working for because it promotes observation and experiment.

*Definition.*—The consonant *y* can be voiced or unvoiced. It is something like a very tight *ee*. The front side parts of the tongue press up against the teeth, but as the tip does not touch the teeth ridge there is a small space through which air can pass before the tongue snaps down in a lively way.

*Triples.*—Yellower, yellowing, yesterday.

A point of interest is that in many languages *y* is represented by *j* (called “yod” or “yot”), and that the English pronunciation of *j* is unusual.

*Note.*—The important “you” group of words should be left for consideration with long *oo*.

*n + y.*—Modern usage has turned the *i* of a few such words as *union*, *opinion*, and *onion* into a consonant, *y*, whereas it remains a vowel in French. This is worth mentioning only as a point of interest except in classes where, as a result of a general slack tendency, such words tend to retain their nominal number of syllables. Also it does prepare the way for such words as “new,” to be treated later, which very commonly give trouble.

Let children practise *ny-ny-ny-ny* with some force, and then this market cry, with the mouth well open for “round,” etc.

#### 18. ONIONS

*Onions, onions!*  
*All round and sound,*  
*Sixpence a pound,*  
*Onions!*  
*Onions, onions,*  
*Onions!*

LETTERS: *i*, *vr*. SYMBOL: *r*

For some people this is an easy letter, for others it is so difficult as to come into the individual defect class; while even of those who can say a normal *r*, by no means all can trill it. But because all children are ambitious to do so, and because trilling is so valuable as a physical exercise and stimulant to the tongue and vocal chords, experiments should be launched early.

For *r* virtuosi, the best way of introducing the sound is to trill a tune—“Pop Goes the Weasel” is a good one—to the admiring class, and to invite those who can do so to follow suit. The invitation will be accepted with enthusiasm by some.

For less-accomplished trillers a certain compromise will be advisable. “Some people can trill whole tunes on *r*. I can’t do so myself, but no doubt some of you are more lucky. Who would like to try? . . . Don’t chop it into short lengths: let each *r* roll smoothly on until it is time to take breath—like a small drum.” Knock-out competitions in tune trilling are good fun, starters standing up, and sitting down when their *r* fails.

Whatever the approach, the first comment and question should be, “That was a very lively performance, at least for those who could do it. Do you feel any different, any livelier in the speech works, after than before? . . . Where: in your tongue or your throat or what?” The answer is both. (Trilling is in fact so lively a form of throat massage as to stimulate circulation to an extent which can be detected by the laryngoscope, the chords become comparatively rosy.)

Next comment: “You may be able

to trill an *r* easily, but it will puzzle you to describe how you do it. Try."

*Learning to Trill.*—Next: "Of course, you can say *r* quite well without being able to trill it. But trilling is good fun and very lively and healthy for your throat and tongue. Not everyone can learn to trill, but most people can. I know of a man\* who had written several books about speech, and he was annoyed at not being able to trill *r*, although he could say ordinary *r* properly. So he set about practising it for two or three minutes a day. He said 'ulla-urra' briskly time after time, pushing the *l* rather hard and the *r* harder still. In the end he could trill like a kettle drum, but it took him four months. Why did he choose *l* to show the way?" Answer, as a result of experiments: because the tongue positions are something alike, though for *r* the tongue is more arched. No doubt that is why Chinese, who have no *r* sound, tend to say "velly pretty" for "very pretty."

*The Rule of r.*—After these gymnastics, which will encourage many children to private exhibition and practice, we come down to ordinary *r*. The following is an apt link: "*R* is a fine sturdy consonant, and it is a pity that it seems to have fallen out of fashion in England. This is not so in Scotland. You hear Scots who say 'wurruld' for 'world.' No ordinary English speakers do that. Indeed, some seem to be ashamed of the letter *r*, and never sound it at all except at the beginning of words or inside a word when a vowel follows. Some even miss the *r* out of 'very'—which sounds rather feeble, and they never sound an *r* at the end of a word, even when the next word

begins with a vowel. And yet those same people will often put an *r* in where there isn't one—'the idear of it,' and so on. Very odd.

"Here is a good rule: always sound *r* when it is followed by a vowel, unless a stop separates them."

Specimen sentences in which every final *r* may be sounded: "Here are our Easter eggs." "Her other exercise is very good." Make up other useful exhibition sentences.

*Practice material* will be found in several later jingles. The following covers the letter initially, besides revising *l* between vowels, touching upon final *y*, and bringing into the limelight a popular word which has a tiresome habit of dwindling into two syllables instead of three. (Note that it should be treated as a dialogue.)

19. REALLY!

"There's not a word 'reely'

Rhyming with 'mealy':

Really 'really' is

What you should say.

Open your mouth more

To say it ideally."

"Reely?"

"No, really:

That is the way.

If you practise it so,

You will presently feel

That your 'really' is really

Really real."

*Triples.*—Revelry, rollicking; merrily, wailly, wearily; rippling, rambling, rumbling, all giving *l* syllabic value; romany, which is easy, and yeomanry, which is not, though it is made of the same sounds in different order; bravery and livally—two difficult ones. Also secretary and cemetery as trisyllables (see page 191).

\* In short, the present writer.

*Exercise 17.*—See Exercises 7 and 8, and do the same thing with *r*: run, running, ran, wing, etc., and such phrases as "Run along home."

*Difficult Words.*—Draw attention to words like "February" and "library," from which the *r* is apt to disappear. In the same class mention "secretary," taking care that children do not stress the *a*: the words need a strong stress on the first syllable, and no more.

*Character.*—No further comment is necessary, since our discussion has done something to draw attention to the letter and to restore it to the position from which it has dropped—one more example, one suspects, of the kind

of refinement which derives from anaemia.

*Defective r* is difficult to treat. Sufferers do not really substitute *w* for *r*. The trouble probably is that they do not let the tongue up into the position necessary for vigorous action. The "ulla-urra" exercise will help in this respect, especially if lip rounding is temporarily avoided, something like a smile being substituted. It is not useful to urge defectives to try initial *r*. They do much better with *r* between vowels, especially when the first encourages mouth opening, e.g. areas, hurry along. Other words: Harry, area, aroma, berry, heraldry.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# VOWELS

IT is curious that speech training generally tends to feature vowels at the expense of consonants. The argument may be that vowels colour speech the more, but against this there is the fact that children find them less interesting than consonants since they are less vigorous and palpable, and that for the same reason they are more difficult for the teacher to handle effectively.

To the question, Which are the more important?, the answer is, Neither. They are complementary. If we compare speech with painting, we may say that vowels are the colour, consonants the line. The one supplements the other. As has already been said, it is a mistake in speech training to pay too long attention to one thing at a time. It is better to change frequently from consonant to vowel and vowel to consonant. Always, whatever the immediate subject, we are working for certain broad and simple things, and it is this that gives unity to our work.

In the matter of vowels—which, of course, includes diphthongs—we may be said to be working all the time for shapeliness and variety as against slovenliness and uniformity. This double principle is so constant that to mention it in the following sections every time it is relevant would be tedious. We may therefore examine it a little more closely at once and have done, or as nearly as may be.

First, no vowel can be called easy. In one district or another every vowel is subject to a greater or lesser degree of variation from standard. Variation, especially in the matter of broadening, may be due to misapplied vigour, and this, however salient the effect, cannot be called intrinsically bad. On the other hand, especially as we come south-east, it may be due to the kind of limpness which uniformly narrows vowels and makes them unduly alike. This is undesirable. In towns we shall frequently meet the kind of slick slovenliness which elides syllables. We shall also meet the kind of limpness which allows vowels to slither into something like diphthongs. This is also undesirable. Our most general instruction will be, "Open your mouth and see that your lips are not lazy."

A constant difficulty is that the difference between what we feel to be desirable and what we feel to be emphatically not may be slight—and the slighter the difference the more difficult it is to remedy. This is why average town speech is much more tricky to handle than a vigorously broad dialect. One thing that helps us is that all vowels are sustainable, and we shall make use of this fact to give children the opportunity of listening to every vowel they make, and some of the possible variations. In other words, we shall sustain every vowel on tunes.

Finally, how shall we decide what we aim at in each vowel, and what we are to attempt to eliminate? What will be our criterion? The answer is, and must be, our personal taste, which we shall be at pains to make as informed and unprejudiced as we can.

As teachers, we shall cultivate the habit of listening to speech with discrimination, especially and most critically to our own. We shall decide what we think good in general and in detail, and work steadily for that. We cannot do more.

LETTERS: *u(p)*, *o(ne)*, *(en)ou(gh)*.  
SYMBOL: *Λ*

The claims of long *oo* to be taken first of our new group, in districts where it gives no trouble, have already been mentioned. There is also something to be said for *Λ*. It is not very interesting, and in some Midland and Northern districts is almost a foreign sound, its place being taken by short *oo* (except, curiously, in "put" in the golf sense). But it is not difficult to teach, and it is useful for attaching to other vowels in preparation for diphthongization.

*Exhibition.*—Refer back to "Mother Luck's Duck" (7), and ask what vowel is prominent in the first two lines.

Then revive "Onions" (18). An experiment in observation. "How many times does a real *Λ* come in the word 'onions'? . . . Twice? Is the second one really the same as the first? Do we quite say 'unyuns'?" The children will agree that the second vowel is less definite than the first—their first introduction to neutral *e*, though this is not worth mentioning yet.

Finally, introduce this market cry, which is useful in that it makes *oo*

substitution sound comical, and revises *p* and *l* effectively.

## 20. PLUM! PLUMS

*Plums!*

*Plums!*

*Fine ripe plump plums!*

*Fine ripe plump plums!*

*Plump plums,*

*Plump plums!*

*Yellow plums,*

*Purple plums,*

*Fine ripe plump purple plums*

*Plums!*

Mention that some people in some parts tend to say something like "plump plams," which sounds mincing, while in others they go in for "ploomp plooms," which sounds grumpy. In some places *o(n)* is substituted in certain words, especially "wan" as in "wander" for "one."

Have mirrors used to establish the differences: *u* is like short *a* as far as mouth opening goes, but for *a* we spread the lips. To change from short *oo* to *u* we open the mouth a little more and let the lips go.

*Definition.*—The vowel in *u(p)* is a half-way kind of vowel. The mouth is moderately open, the lips are normally slack, and the tongue is at rest, the tip touching the lower front teeth as usual.

*Specimens.*—Let children collect *u* words: cup, cut, cunning, country, wonder, and make exhibition sentences.

*Sustaining* is not specially useful, as the sound is too indeterminate and colourless, but it may be briefly tried.

*Alternation.*—Look—luck—lock; one—wan(der); tuck—tock—tuck, tick—tuck—tock.

Specimen contrast sentence. Of the

two children one looked rosy and one wan.

*Triples.*—Revive such earlier examples as involve our vowel, e.g. wonderful, and add utterly, Uppingham, one of you, none of you.

*Note* the curious and widespread habit of saying "jest" for "just," a change which occurs in no similar word. Alternate rust—rest, and the reverse; then just—jest.

LETTERS: *ee, ei, ie, ea*. SYMBOL: *i*:

This is a more interesting vowel because it is more determinate. It is not difficult to teach, rarely giving trouble except (*a*) that before *l* + a consonant it is apt to slacken into *i* (see page 206), and (*b*) that in some town areas it slackens into a diphthong something like *u(p) + ee*—a poor effect. This is the result of lack of the tension which is *ee*'s marked characteristic.

*Preparation.*—Recall attention to short *i* by revising one or other of jingles 8, 9, 10. Ask the children to sustain *i* and then harden and sharpen it, spreading the lips briskly. What sound does that make? Which is the more exciting: *i* or *ee*?

*Exhibition.*—What back jingles bring in the new sound markedly? "Cheap Peaches" (15) will probably be first choice, with "Tea for Two" (16) and "Really!" (19) as runners-up.

Introduce the following, which shows *A* in "some," and compare the *i* of the unaccented last syllable of "coffee" with the real *ee* for "tea."

#### 21. LEMONADE

*Father's keen on coffee,  
Mother's keen on tea,  
But always if I have the choice  
It's lemonade for me.*

*Some are keen on coffee,  
Some are keen on tea,  
But always fizzy lemonade  
For me, me, me:*

*Lemonade for breakfast,  
Lemonade for tea—  
I always like it lemonade  
For me, me, me.*

Walter de la Mare's "The Cup-board" shows our vowel markedly.

*Words and Sentences.*—Collect specimen words as usual. (This, because it should be done with every vowel, will not be mentioned again.)

*Sustain* as usual on a tune. (This, for the same reason, will in future be taken for granted.)

*Triples.*—Easily, easier (with the *r* properly used for connection), and feelingly, which is difficult.

*Alternations.*—*ee-u(p)* to the Exercise 13 tune, with *h* and *ch* as the introductory consonants for additional, thus preparing roughly for "ear" diphthongs. In this connection the following permanent exercises may also be introduced:

*Exercise 17.*—Alternate *ee-u(p)* to the first two lines of "Pop Goes the Weasel," which gives the right contrasted strength and length to diphthongal pairs of this kind:

d : - : m   r : - : f   m : - : s   d : - :
<i>ee</i> <i>u</i> <i>ee</i> <i>u</i> <i>ee</i> <i>u</i> <i>ee</i>
d : - : m   r : - : f   m : - : d : .
<i>ee</i> <i>u</i> <i>ee</i> <i>u</i> <i>ee</i> <i>u</i>

*Exercise 18.*—The same thing reduced to speech, which looks a little abstruse on paper but is not in practice:

<i>ee</i> : - : -   - : <i>u</i> :	<i>ee</i> : - : -   - : <i>u</i> :
<i>ee</i> : - : -   - : <i>u</i> :	<i>ee</i> <i>u</i> : :   : :

These experiments will lead naturally to description on these lines:

*Definition.*—*ee* is our keenest vowel. It is narrow and sharp and tense. The lips are stretched in a smile. The teeth are not far apart. The tongue feels brisk, and is rather high and flat, with the tip touching the lower front teeth near their top—higher than usual.

*Diphthongization.*—The tendency to slacken "ea" into *taɪ* will probably have disappeared under attention. If not, the tick should be stigmatized, and practice given in sustaining a very tense *ee*. No physical difficulty is involved: it is only a slack habit.

LEFTERS: *e*(nd), (br)*ea*(d), (s)*ay*(s).

SYMBOL: *æ*

This vowel ranges from the close *ay* diphthong, almost *ee*, heard in Scotland and in slightly less acute form in Devon, neither of which offends, to something like short *a* in some Midland and Northern districts, which is distinctly startling though in no way slovenly.

*Exhibition.*—Refer back to "Anemone" (3) and discuss the sound, bringing out the point that it is bright, but not keen like *ee*—a rather gentle kind of vowel. Refer also to "Lemonade" (21). Then introduce this dramatic monologue which, besides showing the vowel and revising initial *t* and final *d*, gives a fine opening to the emphatic turns of "Ted" into "Tad":

## 22. SLEEPY TED

*Ted! Ted,  
Do get to bed,  
Don't settle there again,  
Nursing your head.  
You said you were going  
Not long after seven—*

*Just look at the clock:*

*Nearly ten to eleven!*

*Ted! Ted,*

*Your eyes are so red,*

*Do get to bed with you, Ted.*

*Ted!*

*(There he is, snoring again. What a boy! TED!)*

*Triples.*—Revive *enemy*, anything. Then add any men, many men, merrily, elderly, and feathery if *th* is safe.

*Alternate e—u(p)* to the Exercise 13 tune, with *f* and *th* as introductory consonants to additional; also to Exercises 17 and 18 (preparing for "air" diphthongs); also *e* and *i*, with *m* and *n* as introductory in Exercise 13 (preparing for *ay* diphthong words). Also, if necessary, alternate *e* and short *a*, and add such pairs as: bad beds; red radishes; Teddy Tadpole.

*Definition.*—Like *u(p)*, *e* is a half-way vowel, but the lips are more spread. The tongue is flat and fairly high, but not so high as for *ee*.

*Broadening.*—If this is not already settled, persist in alternating short *a* and *e*, with the mouth rather exaggeratedly open for *a*. The great thing is to get the difference perceived.

LEFTER: *a*(t). SYMBOL: *æ*

This sound is less important in itself than as a ground for comparison with *ah*. In view of the frequent connection of short *a* with internal and final *t* it will be a good plan to go on to that next, follow it with short *o*, and then pass to *ah* as our next vowel of primary importance.

In some districts there is a tendency to flatten short *a* into something like *u(p)*. Elsewhere it broadens into almost an *ah*, and in some town areas, especially among girls, it suffers "refine-

ment" into *e* ("Fency thet!"). But none of these faults is difficult to treat, and the last usually yields to good-tempered mockery.

*Introduction.*—Ask for the prominent vowel in the following jingle, which also revises *h*:

### 23. HANDY ANDY

*Handy Andy has an axe  
Which Handy Andy uses,  
Giving cracks and smacks and whacks  
To any trees he chooses.*

*Sturdy oaks and elms and ashes—  
Not a one but cracks and crashes:  
None can stand the hacks and cracks  
Of Handy Andy's axe.*

*Triples.*—Happily, family.

After this and a little sustaining, the usual word collections, and alternation of *a-e*, and *end-head*, in that order and reverse, description will be easy:

*Definition.*—"If you make the vowel of 'end' and then open the mouth about a quarter of an inch more, you get the vowel of 'at.' The lips are not really spread, but they are tenser than in *u(p)*. The tongue is still fairly high, as for *e(nd)*."

Next follow with this jingle, which also features *u*:

### 24. ANNE AND DIANA

*Anne and Diana  
Are out in the rain.  
Anne and Diana  
Have come in again.*

*Says Anne to Diana,  
"That's quite the best plan."  
"I think so too,"  
Says Diana to Anne.*

*They always agree  
If they possibly can:  
Two sensible people,  
Diana and Anne.*

This provides opportunity for a vigorous return to the two following faults, in districts where they flourish:

*Glottal Stopping.*—Note if there is any tendency to chop the beginning of words beginning with a vowel, especially "Anne" within the phrase. If so, take the phrase "With Anne and Diana," and persist until the choppers give way and say it like a single smooth word. Follow this with "Here are Anne and Diana," thus adding normal liaison of final *r* before a vowel.

*Intrusive r.*—Note if there is any tendency towards "Dianar and Anne." If so, practise slow, smooth alternation of *u(p)-a(nd)-u-a*, pointing out that it is perfectly easy to pass from one to the other without indulging in either a throat hiccup or a flick of the tongue. From this pass to "Diana and Anne," markedly sustaining the last letter of the first word to the value of *u(p)*. Add "Here are Diana and Anne," and "The idea of its being hard to say 'Diana and Anne' is absurd, isn't it?"

*Further Alternation.*—Well sustained: *a(t)-o(n)-aw, a-o-aw*; also *and-on-always*.

Also combat chopping by using these triples, insisting on the whole octave flowing down like one long smooth word. Amberly, Amazon, affable, the second syllables of which should be kept spacious. "Appetite" gives lively lip work, and "Adela" works the tongue briskly and gives intrusive *r* a chance to show if it still has any life in it.

Persist in exercises of this kind in consecutive lessons until intrusive *r* is



## V O W E L S

slain and the glottal stop is used only as an emotional effect (e.g. "It is 'awful. I 'absolutely forbid you to think of it").

LETTERS: o(n), (wh)a(t), (c)ou(gh).  
SYMBOL: ɔ

After short *a* and final and internal *t*, as has been suggested, pass to this vowel, which is neither very interesting nor troublesome.

Occasionally one meets the sounds insufficiently rounded, so that it sounds rather like *ah*—a poor effect which is easy to cure by stressing the lip element and practising alternation with *aw*.

*Introduction.*—The following market call gives the vowel a good showing, recapitulates several vowels upon which we have already worked, notably the *e* of "yellow," and gives us opportunity to note for future use the quality of long *oo* and *oh* + *l*.

### 25. ORANGES!

*Oranges, oranges*  
*Yellow as gold!*  
*All of them juicy,*  
*None of them old.*  
*No need to feel 'em—*  
*You'll see if you peel 'em.*  
*Oranges, oranges.*  
*Yellow as gold!*  
*Oranges!*

A point of interest, which will draw confirmation from the cinema, is that Americans and Canadians virtually do not use short *o*, substituting a slightly prolonged *aw* in such words as *song*, *long*, *wrong*—a rather rich, pleasing effect. This tendency is also frequent in Scotland.

Alternation of *a(t)*—*o(n)*—*a-o* will lead to this description:

*Definition.*—If you make the vowel of "an," and then round the lips a little and slightly drop the tongue, you have the vowel of "on." If you carry the rounding and tongue-dropping still farther, you get *aw*.

*Further Alternations.*—*a(u)*—*o(n)*—*aw*, *a-o-aw*, slow and well sustained. Also: Hand on all of them. Can Tom walk on?

Pass on to exhibit the vowel again while practising *w* and inspecting final *t* closely. This story jingle should be acted by a narrator and two speakers:

### 26. WHATNOT

*There was once a little old lady who had an old-fashioned whatnot in one corner of her parlour, and she thought she would like another in the other corner to match. What she forgot was that whatnots are not what is called fashionable nowadays, so that she was most surprised when she went to the furniture shop and spoke to the young man who kept it. This is how their conversation went:*

"Have you got a whatnot?"

"A whatnot?"

"A whatnot.

I want a little whatnot

With a mirror on the top."

"I haven't got a whatnot."

"Not a whatnot?"

"Not a whatnot.

Whatnot's not what I go in for:

This is not a whatnot shop."

LETTERS: *ah*, *a*, (l)au(gh). SYMBOL: a:

In itself the full *ah* gives little trouble. The only real difficulty about it, as we shall see presently, is that it is by way of being a cause of bitter com-

plaint in some parts of the North and Midlands. In order to avoid getting mixed up in this until one is ready for it, it is as well to avoid a jingle for the moment. Simply make the sound, and inquire why singers enjoy it so much. (Because it causes maximum opening of the mouth and gives a fine free feeling to the throat. It is generally regarded as the most vocal of vowels.)

From this go straight on to the alternation of *ah-i* (in preparation for *I* diphthong). Experiments may also be tried with *ah-aw* to show increase of lip rounding, *ah-o(n)* to show the slight but remarkably operative alteration in the tongue position, and *ah-u(p)* to show the general slackening which takes place for the second vowel. These comparisons will end naturally in description:

*Definition.*—*Ah* is the widest open and fullest of our vowels. That is why singers like it so much. The mouth is opened to its comfortable widest, the tongue is well down, with the tip touching in front as usual, and the lips are a little smiling, though not so stretched as for *a(t)*.

We may now approach the debatable ground in districts where the discussion will be relevant: "In some parts of the country practically everyone says 'pass, glass, class, dance, France,' and so on, with the short *a*. In other parts practically everyone says those words with an *ah*, like this (here exemplify). "Which way do most people say those words in this part of the country?" Discussion follows.

"Now here is the funny thing: the people who say *ah* don't at all object to the people who use the short *a*, but the people who use short *a* are apt to get

very hot about those who say *ah*—'dance, class,' and so on. They seem to think that they are putting it on, and being lahdidah. They are not. It is merely the custom of their part of the country. After all, the people who say 'pass' and 'glass' and so on with a short *a* use *ah* in such words as 'farm, cart, calm,' and plenty of other words, without the slightest feeling of lahdi-dah.

"Which are we to use? Which is the better? There is no better about it. The only thing to be said is that the *ah* is nearer what is called standard English, and it is a finer sound to sing than short *a*.

"So now let us forget all about lahdi-dah and compare the two vowels to see how they are different. Say *ah-a(t)-ah-a*. What difference do you feel?" The answer will be that both vowels have the mouth well open, and that when we change from *ah* to *a(t)* the lips stretch a little more towards a smile, and the tongue becomes slightly more tense: all of which is plainly visible in the mirror.

*Triples.*—Heartily, afterwards.

*Practice material* may now be safely used. The first jingle is full of words for which the dictionary gives *ah*, while the second contrasts usage:

## 27. LATHERING FATHER

*"What's lather like?"*

*I asked my father.*

*He lathered my chin*

*To let me see.*

*(I'd really rather*

*Lather Father*

*Than have Father*

*Lather me!)*

## 28. LIGHT THE GAS

*Most folk call a läss a läss,  
But some say gräss and some say  
gräss;  
Some say cläss and some say cläss,  
But few say "Light the gäs."  
You may choose which way you will:  
Gräss or gräss, they both will päss,  
So will cläss or cläss (but still,  
I don't like "Light the gäs").*

LETTERS: (t)oo, (d)o, (thr)ough, (n)ew.  
SYMBOL: u:

*Introduction.*—Refer back to *w*, asking the children to put their mouths as if they were going to say *w* and then make a vowel of it instead: a long oo. Ask them to do it again, with their mind on the tongue tip. In the *w* position they will notice that the tongue is rather tucked away with the tip touching the front wall of the mouth underneath the lower front teeth. When they make the vowel, do they feel the tongue tip change at all? Do they find it go so far down that it even withdraws a little from the front wall? If so, good: that is a really long oo.

Or do they, on the other hand, feel the tongue come up almost as if saying *i*? If so, we are in that large area, which extends over a great part of west Scotland, south-west England, and the north of Ireland, where long oo is rarely normally used, the whistling oo being substituted. This is a pleasant sound, but entirely foreign, being equivalent to the vowel in French "*pure*," etc.

This is curiously difficult to eliminate, since those who do it seem instinctively to raise the tongue tip as they round the lips. Ask them to put the tongue tip as low down as it will go, while they round the lips without

breathing out. Next, when they have got this idea, ask them to blow out gently without allowing the tongue to move. Next add voice, and afterwards, when this is safe, let them try prolonging "too-do," etc. This takes time, but the required result can be obtained. Everything depends upon the tongue tip being kept low.

*Definition.*—The oo in "too" is our roundest and closest vowel. The teeth are not far apart, the lips are rounded as if for whistling, and the tip of the tongue is kept very low indeed. That is important.

*Exhibition.*—The first jingle asks for slow speaking, and revises *h*:

## 29. WHO?

*"Who?" hoots the Owl  
The long night through,  
"Who?"  
As if what he meant was  
"Who are you,  
Who?  
Who goes there  
In the silvery night,  
Walking alone  
In the moon's pale light?  
Who? . . ."*

The next refers back to *j*, *d*, and final *y*. Note should be taken in passing of how the word "duty" is spoken.

## 30. BROODY JUDY

*Judy, Judy,  
Don't go broody,  
Do your duty, lay an egg.  
You're so moody,  
Broody Judy!  
Do pray listen when I beg:  
Judy, Judy,  
Don't go broody,  
Do your duty, lay an egg*

*(Oh, you bloody Judy!  
What shall I do with you?  
Such a broody old hen I  
never did see.)*

The third should be taken as a dialogue between the cow and the child. It incidentally pays much attention to final *l*, and for that reason it may well be left over until we return to that consonant later.

31. DOLEFUL BLUEBELL.

*"Moo . . . Moo . . ."  
What a to-do!  
Really, Bluebell,  
What's bothering you?  
"Moo . . . Moo . . ."  
Drop it now, do!  
Why can't you say  
What is worrying you?  
But Bluebell is hopeless  
At taking suggestions,  
And all she can manage  
In answer to questions  
Is "Moo . . . Moo . . ."  
What a to-do!  
Bluebell, it's useless  
My staying with you.  
"Moo . . . . ."*

Alternations may be practised between *oo* and practically any other vowel. Special attention should be paid to *oo-u(p)* in preparation for the diphthongization of such words as "poor."

Provided that the teeth are kept as far apart as the sound allows, *oo* is the finest of all vowels for the sustaining of tunes, making the best possible corrective for harsh tone, and also doing much to encourage high resonance.

NEW, DEW, VIEW, ETC.

Even with speakers whose long *oo* is normal, words of this class are often

extremely troublesome. There is a difference of opinion as to precisely how they should be spoken, some holding that they should be pronounced *nyoo*, *dyoo*, *vyoo*, etc. (Daniel Jones gives *nju:*, *dju:*, *vju:*, etc.), others preferring *nioo*, *dioo*, *vioo*. There is nothing against the latter, unless the *i* is unduly prolonged, which produces a peculiarly thin and mean effect.

A handy means of getting a suitable effect is to imagine someone asking a number of people one after another: "D'you think so? D'you? D'you? D'you? D'you?" with the "you" rather emphatic and prolonged. Let this be done a number of times before revealing the fact that this is what we want for "dew." Then practise *dyoo*, *nyoo*, *fyoo*, *vyoo*, *tyoon*, etc., always with the vowel rather prolonged. In "tune" etc. note that we do not want "chune," any more than we want "Jew" for "dew."

Practice sentences: "I like old songs, but I like a few new tunes too, don't you?"

LETTERS: (t)oo(k), (p)u(t). SYMBOL: u

This is perfectly easy in most districts, but one occasionally meets it unrounded ("luck" for "look"). Elsewhere the opposite is characteristic, "look" rhyming with "spook." This is salient but not obnoxious, although the *lewkw-liewkw* variant certainly is.

Being indeterminate, the required vowel is difficult to secure in districts where it is in short supply. One can only try till one gets something like it, and then confirm by practising alternations. Begin without voice, by breathing *u(p)* and then without break changing to long *oo*. That gives us the two extremes. The next thing is to estab-

lish a sound between the two. With a view to escaping from association, begin with such nonsense words as these, all with the vowel long enough to observe: vun-vōōn-vōōn; trub-trōōb-tōōb; and then go on to luck-look-loot; nun-nook-noon; shun-shook-shoot; fun-foot-fool. Note the tendency in some districts to use short oo in "food," and practise fun-foot-food. Also make use of the variance in standard English between rōōm and rōōm to practise run-rook-rude; rum-rōōm-rōōm. The same variants occur in "broom."

*Definition.*—To produce short oo, make u(p) and then round the lips fairly, especially the lower lip. Too much rounding makes long oo

*Practice.*—Try the sentence: "It is odd that though we say spook, we don't say cōōk, lōōk, bōōk, and so on: we cōōk, lōōk, rōōk, nōōk, and shōōk."

The same oddity is stated in this jingle:

### 32. BY HOOK OR BY CROOK

*Since s-p-double-o-k is "spook,"  
You'd think t-double-o-k was "tōōk,"  
But no, it's "tōōk,"  
Which rhymes with book,  
By hook or by crook,  
Cook, nook, look, rook,  
And brook and shook.*

LETTERS: *e*, (h)ear(d), *ur*, *ir*.

SYMBOL: *ə*:

This sound, a modern result of the suppression of *r* when final or followed by a consonant, is difficult to handle where it is more or less burred, but it must be given as much attention as it needs, since an excessive burr, especially of final *er*, is enough to discolour the whole speech effect. In this connection

*er* should be studied in close connection with neutral *e*, with which this chapter ends

### 33. ABSURD

*If you heard  
That a bird  
Had occurred  
With fur  
As well as a beak,  
You'd observe,  
"My word!  
What a bird!  
That is surely unique,"  
Unless you demurred,  
"A bird  
Gone furred?  
Absurd!"*

Point out that *er* is easy enough to hear and recognize, but less easy to define and to sustain. It varies widely from district to district, the pleasant word "fern" ranging from the bright "fairrn" of Scotland to some very gloomy "furns" elsewhere.

*Alternation.*—Try fun-fern, with the first vowel slightly and the second considerably lengthened. The difference of sound is great, yet the change of physical sensation and position is not much. What is it, chiefly?

*Definition.*—The sound *er* has grown up since English people began to neglect *r* as a consonant. *Er* is like *u*(p), except that the lower lip cups itself a little, and the tongue is faintly tense.

*Practice.*—Sustain heard, bird, sir, etc., and have the *ers* prolonged in "Look at the third word first."

*Triples.* — Mumbling, courteous, furniture.

Another jingle calls for quiet saying with long *ers* to suggest more than is said. The first and last rolled *r*'s should be voiceless, if possible:

34. BREVITY

"Nice bird!"

*Kit purred,*

"Prrrrr. . ."

*Must have heard:*

*Exit bird—*

*Brrr!*

"Smart bird!"

*Kit purred,*

"Prrrrrrr. . ."

(*She's asleep.*)

LETTER: The neutral sound in various spellings. SYMBOL:  $\emptyset$

This does not call for practice, but it is worth notice as one of the curiosities of English, and on account of its importance in the treatment of final *er*.

Mention that French, Italian, and various other languages normally stress all syllables more or less equally, so that none becomes unimportant. English is not like that. We stress our main syllables so markedly that secondary syllables tend to become unimportant: their vowels lose character and are replaced by what is called the neutral, or neutral *e*. (This, except in excess, is not

to be opposed: it is an essential part of English.)

Speak the word "accommodate" with four full vowels. Is that natural? No: we give face value to the second and fourth vowels, letting the other two dwindle to neutral. In the same way *conduct* (noun) has a full vowel in the first syllable, whereas *conduct*, shifting the stress, neutralizes the *o*. Compare *contents* (noun) with *contented*, and let the children collect other examples, noting that this is another reason why English spelling is a faulty guide to pronunciation, and vice versa.

*Final er*. — Mention that many speakers use the neutral in place of final *er*. But not all: there are variations. Exemplify these, in none of which is *r* a consonant: *buttah*, *butter* (with true *er*), *butter* (with a throw-away neutral), and *buttur* (heavily burred). Which do they like best? Discuss the last, the *burr*. How is it made in its extreme form? By curling up the tongue so that the tip is in mid air in mid mouth—an extraordinary position and a clumsy sound.

Leave the real practice to be done in connection with internal *t* (page 204).

## CHAPTER NINE

# DIFFICULT CONSONANTS

LETTER: *th*(in). SYMBOL: θ  
*th*(en). ð

**W**HETHER these are among the easiest or most difficult to sound depends entirely upon district and class. With moderately good speakers they are generally right: with poor speakers they are often not. Introduce them by discussing how they are formed, eliciting the opinion that they are really extremely easy to make.

*Definition.*—To make the first sound of “thin” we put out the tip of the tongue between the teeth, which touch it above and below. We then breathe.

For *th*(en) we do the same, and buzz.

Go on to point out that this is a peculiarly English consonant. The idea of putting out the tongue is so strange to most foreigners that they do not realize that we do it. They fail to “see” the consonant. Consequently, they fail to think it, and to make it. Instead they substitute what sounds to them the nearest thing, and say “sin” for “thin,” “zis” for “this,” “wizout” for “without,” “wiz” for “with,” and so on. When the matter is explained to them they can usually make the sound, but the position is so strange to them that their tongues struggle to retreat, and they find the correct habit difficult to acquire because, though easy enough, the consonant continues to seem excessively foreign.

Film negroes, the children will remember, substitute *t* and *d*: “tink” for “think,” “dis and dat” for “this and that,” “de” with neutral *e* (not *dee*) for “the” before a consonant, “wid” for “with,” etc.

So much may be discussed as a matter of common interest with any class, but what follows need be taken only where it has point:

“Very small English children sometimes seem to have the same difficulty, and substitute *t* and *d* like comic negroes in films. Otherwise they go in for *f* and *v*, especially *v*, talking about *fahver* and *muvver*, and making ‘nothing’ rhyme with ‘muffin’—unless they go so far as to say ‘nuffink,’ like the famous comedian who used to ask: ‘What’s the use of any-fink? Why, nuffink!’ Not many use *f* and *v* at the beginning of words, but some do: ‘What you fink of vat?’—and there’s nothing more they *can* do!

“Most people of any sort of education drop that kind of baby talk as they grow older. Perhaps they realize that most people look upon it as something that simply won’t do; although most unlikely people, who would never dream of calling for their ‘muvver,’ have a way of sticking to ‘wivout.’ Perhaps the false sound is over so quickly that they don’t notice. But other people do.” Whether the question is then put, “Do you know anyone who does that

kind of thing?" must be left to personal discretion.

*Practice.*—Since no difficulty is involved but habit—the greatest difficulty of all—there is nothing to do but have the sound made, looked at, prolonged, and discussed—anything to get it clearly into consciousness. Collecting words and making exhibition sentences is all the more useful because the material is the children's own. Voiced *th* may even be inspected while being sustained on tunes—a curious sensation.

The two following jingles have the advantage of a mild puzzle element. Dithers, of course, is the old pony, and Smithers the crop-tailed terrier.

### 35. THIS AND THAT

*This is this  
And that is that,  
If this is where  
You chance to be,  
But that is this  
And this is that  
If seen from over  
There. You see?  
This or that—  
The word depends  
Entirely on  
Your choice of ends:  
This or that,  
That or this.*

### 36. LEGS AND TAILS

*Father and Mother  
And sister and brother,  
Led by old Dithers  
And followed by Smithers,  
Going to market  
To market a calf;  
  
Full twenty legs  
Among them they muster,  
Full twenty legs  
And two tails and a half;*

*That is of course  
Counting Father and Mother,  
The children, the others,  
And Blithers the calf.*

*(What are the two  
With the two tails between  
them,  
And then what's the one  
With no more than a half?)*

*Note* that *th* after *n* seems to trouble some people, hence the wretched "munce" for "months"; and that *th* seems to rob *ng* before it, hence the frequency of "lenth" and "strenth" for "length" and "strength," by no means only among incompetent speakers.

### T, INTERNAL AND FINAL

The tendency to use a glottal stop instead of *t* in all but the initial position is widespread among English children of the socially poorer kind, and occasionally it spreads like a kind of don't-care affectation among the more fortunate. In Scotland the usage rises much higher in the social scale. This is, of course, purely a matter of habit. Few even of the smallest children find any difficulty in raising the tongue tip to initial *t*, and there is no additional problem about non-initial *t* except custom, which, as we have already seen, can be extraordinarily tenacious.

In classes where the difficulty occurs at the most only sporadically, the new jingle material may follow earlier *t* work without special preparation, and be used for the various revisions which it provides. But where glottal stopping is frequent, frontal attack will be necessary. In the course of discussion of the difficulty, reference may be made to metropolitan newspaper boys, whose



## DIFFICULT CONSONANTS

ttalization is sometimes so intricate to remind the listener of the famous ttennot click, and to need careful ictice to reproduce, even at half- ed.

After preparing the ground by talk, er back to initial *t* and cause it to be ld so that the tongue position may revisualized. Here are the positions: ll me. No doubt. Getting. Impress e fact that for *t*, whatever the posi- n, the tip must get up.

*Practice and Test Material.*—The xt jingle, a very simple one, provides idential opportunity to inspect four nple vowels and the word "one." int out that final *t* occurs eight times, d let a few children read it out while bers give them a tick for each well- ade one.

### 37. POSTMAN'S KNOCK

*Ratta tat!*  
*What is that?*  
*Three fat letters*  
*On the mat:*  
*One for Peter,*  
*One for Pat,*  
*One for me,*  
*And that is that.*

Next, after appropriate exhibition aterial has been invented, let them sten for internal *t*, which comes four mes including the title, and mark in ie same way, allowing nothing for the rt of exaggeration which "postman" apt to stimulate. (It is difficult not to y "poceman," "toce" for "toast," c., but it can be done.) Next practise ng-stopping the *t* in "postman" and ratta." (Leave "letters" and "Peter" r the moment.)

The next revises final *y* extensively nd gives ample chance for internal *t* to

go wrong if it is still weak, in which case more long-stopping practice will be needed. Including the title, it occurs 11 times, in addition to 5 finals:

### 38. KITTY

*Kitty, you are pretty,*  
*Very pretty, that I own,*  
*But what a pity, pretty Kitty,*  
*Not to leave the birds alone!*  
*What a pity,*  
*Pretty Kitty!*  
*Leave the pretty birds alone.*

The next two jingles are designed for use in connection with final *er* (page 202) in such words as "matter," which seem to provide the maximum incentive to glottal substitution. If the *er* is still unsatisfactory, encourage slightly greater mouth opening for it. This one exhibits short *a*:

### 39. THE RAT THAT WAS

*When the cat met the rat,*  
*The latter was fatter,*  
*Alas for the rat*  
*That cat was a rattler!*  
*Now, to finish the tale*  
*Without mincing the matter,*  
*There isn't a rat*  
*And the cat is the fatter.*

Besides internal and final *t*, this concentrates strongly, in contrast to the last, upon thin vowels *i* and *e*.

### 40. A MATTER OF TASTE

*Marmalade is better bitter*  
*If you like the taste of it;*  
*Even if your taste is sweeter*  
*You will still of course admit*  
*Marmalade is better bitter*  
*If you like the taste of it.*

*L*, FINAL AND WITH A CONSONANT  
("Dark" *l*. SYMBOL: ɫ)

This has already been fairly fully prepared for, but it may yet need much patient work, since, finally and still more in combination with a consonant, *l* gives rise to what is probably the most widespread kind of speech clumsiness.

*Introduction.*—After referring back to *l* initial and internal between vowels, let the children sustain it and note how light and pure it is. Then let them alternate ɫ-ɫ-ɫ without voice and with only light breath. They will notice that ɫ causes the body of the tongue, especially the back, to descend a little. They will probably also say that the tongue gets "thicker"—a good description of sensation. They may also observe that the actual note of the breath becomes lower in pitch as they change from *l* to ɫ. If this is exaggerated, the effect is thick and ugly, and—though this should not be mentioned unless necessary—the tip of the tongue eventually comes down from the teeth ridge. This results in a perverted ɫ, which is not a consonant at all but an impure guttural vowel allied to short *oo* or even *aw*.

The following easy jingle provides revision for final *l* and also introduces "little," the commonest of all ɫ catch-words:

41. THE ODD BELL

*Ding dong bell!*  
*Ding dong bell!*  
*I never heard a better little*  
*Ding-dong bell.*  
  
*Bell dong ding!*  
*Bell dong ding!*  
*Now it's ringing back to front.*  
*What a curious thing!*

*Dong bell ding!*  
*Dong ding bell!*  
*Now I can't think what it's up to.*  
*Well, well, well!*

*ee + ld.*—The word "field" often needs inspection, for even when the *l* is not actually debased it is apt to be ugly and to cause the *ee* to change to *i*. If necessary, have both *ee* and ɫ sustained for inspection, and alternate field-filled for comparison.

42. CORNFIELDS

*In April, in April*  
*When meadows are green,*  
*A field filled with corn*  
*Is a sight to be seen.*  
  
*But no sight more lovely*  
*The whole world can hold*  
*Than a field filled with corn*  
*In a ripple of gold.*

For further *-ld* material see jingles 53 and 54.

*p + l, b + l.*—Of all consonants these seem to exert the worst influence upon *l* following, especially when they are preceded by *m*. This market cry and the jingle following feature these difficulties intensively:

43. RIPE APPLES!

*Fine ripe apples,*  
*Ripe apples,*  
*Ripe apples!*  
*Apples ripe,*  
*Apples ripe,*  
*Fine ripe apples!*

Let children collect *-ple* words, to which a final consonant should be added, and read out lists. (*-mple* words should be left for the moment.) Apples, dappled, ripples, tipped, toppled, couples.

## D I F F I C U L T   C O N S O N A N T S

Similarly, *-bl*, but not *-mbl* yet: rabble, rubble, Ribble, hobble, dabbled, dibbled, doubled, troubled, pebbles.

Next, while we are about it, it is worth while to deal with other combinations, allotting different ones to different groups to deal with:

- kl*: tickles, tackles, etc.
- gl*: wiggles, struggles, etc.
- nkl*: tinkled, rankled, etc.
- ngl*: tingled, tangled, etc.
- dl*: muddles, fiddled, etc.
- fl*: raffles, muffled, etc.
- vl*: levelled, shovelled, etc.
- nl*: panelled, tunnelled, etc.
- sl*: bistles, tussled, etc.
- zl*: drizzled, nozzles, etc.
- tl*: little, bottle, cattle, etc.

*-tl* is purposely kept until last, because the group contains several common words, notably "little" and "bottle," which are especially apt to lead **l** into bad ways.

The fact that children find such combinations amusing to the ear enables us to work over this ground with maximum intensity. This makes good preparation for the *-mbl* group, the hardest of all, especially as we have given it mystery by consistently barring it. Begin with this jingle:

### 44. THE HUMBLE BUMBLE BEE

*Bumble bee, bumble bee—  
Or shall I call you "humble bee"?  
Many people call you so,  
Though why I fail to see:  
From the bumptious way you blunder*

*Round the hollyhocks you plunder,  
You sound much more like a bumble  
Than a humble bee to me  
Humble bee? Humble bee?  
No, I'll call you "bumble bee."  
You're much more like a bumble  
Than a humble bee to me.*

Finally ask for rhyme lists for the following: ample, amble; assemble; simple, nimble; scumble.

### D I F F I C U L T   C O N S O N A N T   B U N C H I E S

One thing which makes English difficult for foreigners, and for English speakers too, is its abundance of clumps of consonants. Several have been mentioned in passing, e.g. months, toasts. Note should be taken of others which are found in reading and speech. Note how *n* tends to turn to *m* before *p* (e.g. "They can print on pale brown paper"), how *t* tends to disappear after *k* (exactly, actually, pictures, strictly, etc.), and how difficult *s* is after *st* (chests, posts, etc.). That is why *s* and *st* enter into most tongue-twisters. Children will enjoy collecting and inventing examples. They are not difficult to find in a language which can produce such traps as: "wasps' stings", "Those wasps strike me as distinctly touchy"; "The nests straggled from under the caves," and scores of others. Difficulties which are both understood and tackled are half conquered, and finishing the conquest does much to increase general dexterity and to make easier difficulties seem simple.

## CHAPTER TEN

# DIPHTHONGS

**D**IPHTHONGS, pairs of vowels, are not confined to English, but what makes our diphthongs unique is that we do not step cleanly from one part to the other, but glide through the vowel degrees which lie between. Fortunately for us, this glide adjusts itself if the two main elements are right—but to get them right is in some diphthongs far from easy. The most obvious difficulty is with the first part, which has priority in length and strength; but the conclusion, though short, is quite capable of spoiling the total effect.

Diphthongs, then, are by no means easy to handle. Even if working with children of a class which escapes such aggressive solecisms as glottalized internal *t* and debased *l*, one not infrequently finds the total speech effect spoiled and provincialized by one or two mean diphthongs, most commonly (h)ow and oh.

The best thing to do, after an introductory talk about diphthongs and what they are, not forgetting to see that the word is properly pronounced ("diff-" not "dip-"), is to begin with those which do not commonly offend, and in which the important first element is straightforward. In the course of attaching *Λ* to other vowels we have already done useful preparation, and the fact that it was slightly exaggerated, since *Λ* is more open than the neutral, is a fault on the right side.

We can safely go straight on to the four diphthongs to be heard in "car, air, oar," and "tour," for which the symbols are:

*iə*.—Ask for rhymes for "car," and notice if the second element is sufficiently open. If it is narrow or too burred, revert to the slight exaggeration involved in alternating *i-Λ*. It will pay to spend some time over this, since in correcting the fault now we shall save time over the rest of the group.

*uə* is the next easiest. Ask for rhymes for "doer," and see that "poor" is among them, for although "shaw" is accepted for "sure," however acceptable it may sound to some, "paw" will not do for "poor," and "pawer" is even less acceptable.

*əə* is also not difficult. Ask for rhymes for "drawer." Whether one does anything about the widespread tendency to undiphthongize *əə* must depend upon personal discretion; for whatever one may think of it, "daw" for "door," etc., is an accepted mode.

*ɛə*.—The same cannot be said of this diphthong, and the not uncommon tendency to substitute a lengthened *ɛ* for "ere" in "there," etc., calls for correction by alternation of *ɛ-Λ*, *ɛ-ə*. Since the first element of the diphthong is simple, correction is not difficult. Ask for rhymes for "air."

Lastly, ask for exhibition sentences covering the whole group: e.g. "Here and there, there and here, here, there,

## DIPHTHONGS

and everywhere," in which final *r* before a following vowel should be given its due liaison.

LETTERS: *oy, oi*. SYMBOL: *oi*

Of what may be called the regular diphthongs, this is the least troublesome, just as *aw* is among the safest of vowels.

### 45. A MYSTERY

*Are oysters blessed with feelings?  
Are they ever filled with joy?  
We cannot know, since they are so  
Oysterious and coy.  
At heart they may be roisterous—  
There's no one can decide,  
For even boisterous oysters  
Keep their feelings tight inside.*

### 46. THE DIFFERENCE

*A really truly manly man  
Both young and old enjoy,  
(But I never heard of anyone  
Who liked a boily boy).*

Occasionally one meets *oy* insufficiently rounded and too much like *I*, but this is easily cured by alternating *o.-i*.

LETTERS: *I, ie, y, ye, igh*. SYMBOL: *ai*

This also is not often far wrong. Sometimes one meets the substitution of a broad form not far from *oy*, and town speech, almost exclusively among girls, tends to a dreadfully refined *ay*. It is worth while to introduce the diphthong by mentioning this, and pointing out that whereas the phonetic symbol for *a(t)* is *æ* and for *ah* *ɑ:*, the symbol for *I* is *ai*. Evidently *a* is somewhere between *æ* and *ɑ:*. The question is, to which of the two is *a* nearer? After alternating *æ-i* and *ɑ:-i* the

children will probably decide for *ɑ:-i* as being the nearer, and that *æ-i* is too near the "refined" limit. This is an effective argument against the *ay* tendency, and if it has not quite disappeared by the end of jingle work a little mockery will finish it off.

### 47. I SPY

*I spy  
With my little eye,  
A white kite a-flying  
High in the sky,  
A line with nine nighties  
All hung out to dry,  
And a child on a tricycle  
Cycling by.  
Why— Why—  
Why— Why!—  
What a lot I am spying  
With my little eye!*

### 48. THE FUSSPOTS

*"I don't like pies,"  
Whines finicky Di,  
While Wilfred sighs  
"No, neither do I."*

*"I like anything  
Nice," says Mike.  
"No one but a silly  
Whines 'I don't like'."*

LETTERS: *ay, ai, ei, ei(gh)*.

SYMBOL: *ei*

It is advisable to study this in close connection with *I* because, just as too refined *I* tends to become *ay*, so too unrefined *ay* leans towards *I*—one of the most salient characteristics of Cockney. Children like the venerable anecdote of the hawker of apples all ripe who was incensed to hear the gentleman on the next barrow doggedly shouting "Gripes! Gripes! Gripes!";

and the story has at least the virtue of nicely contrasting the two diphthongs.

What is the difference between them?—very little: merely, at most, the difference between *ah* and *e(nd)*. Alternate the two: *ah-e(nd)-ah-e*; *e-ah-e-ah*—an example of a slight difference in sound making a great difference in meaning, and then exemplify with this market call:

49. GRAPES

*Grapes,*  
*Grapes,*  
*Fine ripe grapes!*  
*Ripe grapes, grapes ripe,*  
*Fine ripe white grapes!*  
*Grapes ripe,*  
*Ripe grapes,*  
*Grapes!*

50. POOR MAISIE

*Maisie May*  
*Went away—*  
*Holiday.*  
*Skies grew grey,*  
*Rained all night,*  
*Rained all day—*  
*Holiday!*  
*Maisie May,*  
*Far from gay,*  
*Rued the day—*  
*Poor bedraggled*  
*Maisie May!*  
*Holiday!*  
*Pooh!*

LETTERS: *ow(l)*, *ough*. SYMBOL: *au*

Introduce this by stating at once that it is the most troublesome of diphthongs. Its range is great, and anything near either limit, whether of breadth or narrowness, is enough to ruin the speech effect at one blow. It is probable that more people's speech is

spoiled by *ow*—and this applies to many whose total effect is otherwise acceptable—than by any other half-dozen sounds put together.

On the one hand is the Cockney substitution of *ah*—no diphthong at all—or even lengthened short *æ*—"rahnd" or even "ra:nd" for "round," etc.: on the other is the widespread tendency, which the present writer for one finds even more detestable, to narrow the diphthong down to *eu*—a mean and starveling interloper.

Compare the two, alternating *a:-u-a:*—*u* and *e-u-e-u*. Which is the nearer to what we want? The first is rather too good to be true, however preferable to the other: what we want is something in between, something at any rate wider open than *e*. If the district is rich in *ow* variants, it will be worth while to go further into them, not forgetting *eo*, which, though one step higher in the Cockney social grade than the unrounded *ah*, is still sufficiently startling. "House" is the best word for comparison, ranging from "ahss" to the detestable "heouse." In country districts one occasionally meets *ow* + *n* changing to *oh*: "poned" for "pound"—curious but not mean.

This jingle, which should be treated as a dialogue, adds exhortation to comedy:

51. Bow Wow!

*"Bow wow wow!*  
*Do you hear that, now?*  
*Only mean little mongrels*  
*Say 'Beow weow weow.'*

*"Bow wow wow!*  
*You try it now:*  
*Open your mouth and say*  
*'Bow wow wow.'*

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*"Bow wow wow.  
Once again now,  
Rounder, still rounder:*

*"Bow. . . .  
Wow. . . .  
Wow!"*

*"Bow. . . .  
Wow. . . .  
Wow!"*

The next overhauls the sound very thoroughly in all contexts, especially + *l* and + *er*, besides touching strongly upon long *oo* and *oh* + *l*:

### 52. OWLS AND OWLETS

*The owl, the owl  
Is a curious fowl,  
Doing what few birds do:  
Hour after hour  
In his bowel, a tower,  
He drowns the whole day through.  
Then, ravenous owl,  
He leaves on a prowl,  
His two eyes as round as an oo,  
And scours the ground  
With never a sound  
But his cry of *te whit te woo.**

*If he spies out a mole  
Away from its hole,  
Or a not-too-big rabbit  
Who's out for a stroll,  
Or goggle-eyed frogs  
Singing carols in bogs,  
Or a scrounging rat—  
Any trifle like that,  
Even beetle or mouse,  
He's away to his house  
With a meal for the Owlets, who,  
Like Father Owl,  
Are curious fowl,  
Though as yet they can't cry "*Te  
woo!*"*

*Owl! 'Ware Owl  
Out on the prow!  
Te woo!  
Te wit!  
Te wooooooooo!*

LETTERS: *o, oh, ow, oa, oe.* SYMBOL: *ou*

This, the richest of diphthongs, is the most commonly ill-treated. Poor speakers blatantly make it *œu*, especially when annoyed, while numbers of cultured speakers seem ashamed of such robust roundness, and emasculate the diphthong to a whole range of feeble *eu* variants. A pity.

An easy way to get the right effect is to revert to long *oo*, for which the distance between the teeth is about little-fingernail depth. Ask the children to double this opening without unrounding the lips. If in doubt they may indeed increase the rounding and consequent tension—anything to avoid slipping into *Λ* or *ε*. Practise this alternation *u:-o-u:-o* thoroughly with mirrors. Then run together so *u:-ou:-ou:* etc., with attention directed to the *u:* for the sake of keeping the rounding.

This triologue jingle directs attention to the word "only," which has already been mentioned, and to the curious fact that, although no one says "lone'y for "lonely," countless people seem unable to manage "only."

### 53. ONLY LONELY

*"Are you sad?"  
"No, only lonely—  
Only two old lonely men."  
"Only lonely?"  
"Yes, sir, yes,—  
And lonely only now and then."*

The next, for three soloists, or for chorus followed by two soloists, concentrates on *o + l* and *ld*, and "poor".

## 54. OLD MRS. MOLE

*Old Mrs. Mole  
Living in a hole,  
Hardly ever seeing light,  
Poor old soul!*

*But maybe Mrs. Mole  
Likes her lonely hole.  
If so you needn't christen her  
A poor old soul.*

*Poor old soul  
For living in a hole?  
No one needs to pity me,  
Old Mrs. Mole.*

The next, more elaborate and calling for slow, quiet intense speech, goes over the same ground more intensively still, also exhibiting *bl*, *ee*, *a(t)* and *(h)ow* with some thoroughness. Each verse should be said more quietly than the one before, the last being repeated on an unforced whisper and ending with a long soft *shl*

## 55. TWILIGHT

*An old old man  
In an old old house,  
With an old old cat  
And a bold old mouse. . . .*

*The old cat drowzes  
On the old man's knees,  
While the old mouse nibbles  
At an old old cheese. . . .*

*The only ghostly sounds  
Are the old man's wheeze  
And the mouse's nibble nibble  
At the old dry cheese. . . .*

*Nibble, nibble, nibble, nibble,  
Bold old mouse:  
You're the only thing that's stiring  
In the whole old house.*

## Triphthongs

There is no need here to go over the "ie," "ou" group in detail. Children who have learned to appreciate diphthongs and to dislike slick methods of undiphthongizing them will have no difficulty in adding the neutral to them, and so saying such words as "fire" and "our" as they should be said.



## WORDS THAT GO WRONG

THERE is material here for a short book, but all that we have room for is a brief classification of the kinds of words which are apt to go wrong, and the ways in which they do so. Many of the words given below are rather above the Junior standard, but since children love to pick up words from their seniors, and often come curious crotchets as a result, it will be permissible to mention them.

The best way of arming children against mispronunciation is to make some current example an excuse for raising the whole question quite early in the speech-training course. Admit frankly that English pronunciation is as illogical as English spelling, and suggest that they shall at once start making a collection of choice examples. Then mention and exemplify the chief types and causes of error, which will now be discussed.

*Slovenliness* and the sheer difficulty of many English words account for many mistakes, some of which have already been mentioned: e.g. without (*v* for *th*), only (with *l* omitted), months, fifths, twelfths (with *th* omitted), toast (with final *t* omitted), and the notorious tongue-twister "statistics."

Slovenliness may be a matter for censure, but it is of the greatest importance not to make fun of children for other types of mistake. We want them to be adventurous in vocabulary, so that it is obviously foolish to make them unad-

venturous for fear of mistakes. Besides, English pronunciation being what it is, it is not surprising that mistakes are frequent: the surprising thing is that they are not more frequent than they are.

*Wrong Stresses.*—In the following common examples of words which are commonly wrongly stressed, the correct stress is indicated by a stroke after the syllable which should carry the accent.

ex'quisite    ad'mirable    the'atre  
pref'erable    mis'chievous    ge'mune

con'trary (except in the nursery rhyme of "Mary, Mary," or when we speak idiomatically of anyone being "con-trairy")

con'tents as contrasted with con-tent'ed, com'promise and con'troversy. awry' is a word which often misleads small children.

*Words Which Are Given Wrong Sounds.*—Many of these are harmless spelling pedantries, and are due to the idea that English spelling may be taken as a guide to pronunciation.

opposite	often given <i>I</i> for <i>i</i>
privacy	often given <i>i</i> for <i>I</i>
mauve	should be <i>oh</i>
gauge	should be <i>ay</i>
vase	English has <i>ah</i> , whereas America has <i>ay</i>
fragrant	should be <i>ay</i>
fragile	soft <i>g</i>
English,	in both of which <i>i</i> is
pretty	correct

chasm, chaos, which all need *k*  
architect

either, English normally has *l*,  
neither whereas American and  
Canadian speakers prefer *ee*

*Words Which Mislead the Eye.*—A large group might be made of such words as "tiagedy" and "elastic," in which the letters are apt to get twisted round (tiadegey, elaskit).

*Too Many Letters.*—In the following examples of words which have a way of attracting to themselves more letters than they need, the intruders are added in brackets.

arith(e)metic umb(e)rella ath(e)letic  
as(h)phalt aer(e)oplane height(h)  
cer(s)ificate sub(s)tract accompan(y)-  
ist

The *l* is apt to be sounded in "folk" and "yolk"—another spelling pedantry.

*Too Many Syllables.*—This is another large group, closely allied to the last. Samples are "secretary" and "cemetery," which commonly attract an unwanted stress on the -ary and -ery, and "fiend," which is often given two syllables instead of the correct one.

*Words Which Drop Letters and Syllables* are legion, especially in slick town speech. "Library" (libry) and "February" are good examples of a group which includes what are probably the two most misused words in the language at present, "particularly" and "actually."

## THE TUNES OF SPEECH

**A**S was suggested in Chapter VI, the second part of jingle 11 may be made to serve as an early and practical introduction to the important and fascinating subject of intonations, or, as we shall call them, speech tunes. Most children, and not a few adults, seem to be unaware of the existence of these. In conversation they use them freely enough, but in such a purely instinctive way that when they come to reading aloud they are hopelessly at sea. Some have such lively ears that they never go wrong over intonation, but they are in a minority, as one need only listen to the average amateur dramatic company, whether adult or juvenile, to realize.

Tell the class that they may add to the jingle as many lines of "caws" as they please, provided that each line says something fresh. It is, for example, easy to make the crows express good temper, curiosity, excitement, laying down the law, apprehension, despondency, disgruntlement, and sheer grumpiness. The relevant comment and question is: "It is surprising that one sound-group, which is not even a sensible word, can be made to express so much. How is it done?" Answers will include facial expression, which should be neglected for the moment; loudness and impact of voice; and pitch. They are much less likely to include the most important of all, tune (intonation), and this will need to be intro-

duced by the teacher. Once a few examples have been given to show how one phrase may be spoken to various tunes, and how the change alters the effect, children will provide other instances with a readiness which shows that we have made them free of a new speech interest which they recognize as real and personal. A good thing to mention is that dogs are sensitive to intonation: "If I am getting ready to go out, my dog is most interested. But if I say to him in quite a natural way, 'I can't take you today, Sandy,' he droops and doesn't even trouble to come to the door. Does that mean that he understands the words? No, because if I say exactly the same words to a cheerful tune, he stays as pleased as ever. It isn't as if I had said the word 'No.' I think he recognizes that word, however I say it. He was just going by the tune. What kind of tune did I use when he gave up hope? Listen, and try to draw it. Now listen to the cheerful tune which didn't fit the words, and try to draw that."

After this, the children will be willing to accept a principle which is of fundamental importance in speech: "It is not only what we say that matters, but the way we say it, and the tune we use. The same words may mean several different things; the wrong tune may even make a sentence mean exactly the opposite to what the words say—usually in a sarcastic and unpleasant way."

It will be worth while to say that we shall be discussing this interesting point again later, and to suggest that the children may possibly come across some good examples if they listen for them.

Next, though possibly in a later lesson, it will be profitable to take up the suggestion that speech effect depends considerably upon facial expression. Important though an expressive face is, the children will at once admit that they would recognize the import of the various "caws" just as well if the speaker turned his back. This may be tested, and will lead to the conclusion that speech, if really expert, can produce almost every desired effect without help of face or gesture.

## Confirmation by Wireless





If this were not so, radio would be comparatively ineffective, and radio plays impossible. As it is, a good speaker can almost make us see him, or the person he is pretending to be. This is wonderful. How does he do it?

This early mention of wireless is effective, since it opens up an endless supply of "wise saws and modern instances," and of subjects for day-to-day discussion. The question of dialect will certainly crop up at an early date, and so will the subject of speakers we like, and why; and the reverse. Children are quick to decide that we are quickly bored by people who do not speak out and speak clearly, whose tone is dull, and whose intonation is flat and repetitive—realizations which have interesting repercussions upon their own practice and efficiency. Speaking with backs turned, or behind a screen, or through a microphone if one is available—all of them valuable exercises—will gain a new life and reality.

The cinema is also worth mentioning, if only because it makes children realize that easy audibility depends little upon loudness. They will all have heard screen players who are hard to understand because their limp enunciation defeats even the most blaring amplifier.

## Everyday Instances

But it is everyday examples which most surely convince children of the range of meaning suggestible by variation of inflection and pitch—the recognition of such facts as that when mothers call *up* the octave children are apt to dawdle, but that on hearing the downward octave they fly. Or that two simple words like "Do you?" or "Is he?" can convey a whole range of meaning and suggestion, pleasant and otherwise. For example, as a response to the statement that someone is going to borrow one's pencil, "Is he?" can express

-  a normal response;
-  interested surprise ("Is he now! ") if starting fairly high, whereas rather lower means "I'll see that he doesn't! ";
-  suggests boredom if low, and flurried anxiety if high; while
-  stress on the pronoun differentiates one "he" from another, and so on.

Now the curious thing is that, although children use all these tunes in their own conversation, and will recognize all the implications with alert interest when they hear us exemplify them, not many can employ them to order, especially to the order of the printed page. Some cannot even obey the simple instruction to make the voice

rise at a given comma. In spite of example and even encouraging gesture, they persist in plunging flatly down, until we are apt to give them up as a bad job, concluding that they are tune deaf.

But are they? Are even so-called tone-deaf people tune deaf? If they were, could they use the right inflection in their own speech? The same children who defy our efforts at the comma will giggle at the right moment when they hear such a story as the following, showing that they appreciate the point, which is purely a matter of tune, and a subtle one at that: "The other day I was talking to someone in the garden. There were a good many birds around, and he began to talk about them. Before two minutes were over I was thinking, 'He must know a great deal about birds.' And then—we were standing near the bird bath, and there was a flutter of wings, and down flew a cock chaffinch as bold as you please, and hopped in and had a good splash. When he had finished he chirped and flew off. You know how unmistakable cock chaffinches are. Well, my visitor said, 'Pretty, aren't they! We once had a bird tame like that. Ours was a chaffinch.'"

Here, if the intonation of the last sentence is right, the class laughs. You ask why. Reply: "Well, he pretended to know such a lot about birds, and yet he didn't know a cock chaffinch when he saw one."

"But how could you possibly tell that?"

"Well, by the way he said it."

"Said what?"

"'Ours was a chaffinch.'"

"How did he say it then?"

That will give them pause, but some-

one will probably achieve the correct tune:



Ours was a chaf finch.

Comment: "Right. He gave himself away by his tune. Because, you know, he could have said exactly those same words and they would not have been funny at all. They would simply have meant, 'Ours was a chaffinch, too.'\* How would he say 'Ours was a chaffinch' to mean that?" The best way will be to make a dialogue of it, and experiment. Eventually the tune will emerge:



Ours was a chaffinch.

## Simple Recording

Hardly any child, even if bright enough to reproduce a given tune orally at first attempt, can draw even simple intonations exactly and at once. But that is not surprising, for to catch speech tunes as they fly is not easy. But the skill can be acquired, and is well worth working for.

Begin with the simplest practice: "Draw a line, rising or falling, to match this: 'Do you?'" Quite a number of the class will draw a descending line for a plainly rising tune, or the reverse. But that does not mean that they are beyond hope. They come on with practice.

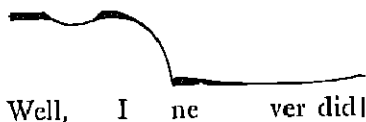
\* Note that adding a word or phrase which shows the implication is an almost infallible way of securing the desired intonation in the main sentence. As soon as this is safe, drop the addition and see if the main intonation remains correct.

## PRACTICAL SPEECH TRAINING

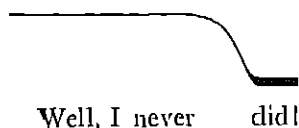
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Presently they will be ready for the next step: "Mark the rise or fall as usual, and thicken the line for the stressed word or syllable."

In due course we can afford to be a little more venturesome, and attack simple variations, e.g.:



as contrasted with:



Later, we can adventure upon the simple vocal waves which can express so much, e.g. the kind of "no" which says that the speaker is not sure:



No.

But they will need to be simple.

Little by little the results of our work, and of the aural awakening which it produces, will be audible in solo reading and the speaking of dramatic dialogue, and we shall have reason to feel that we have taken a step towards solving the major speech problem which is briefly and inadequately discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# VERSE SPEAKING

IT is generally recognized that one of the most valuable legacies children can take from school is a store of notable things notably expressed in words, whether of verse or prose—things which they are the better for carrying in memory, things which they have genuinely made their own. The last is the operative phrase, the core of the problem: how are we to enable children to make words their own, especially words in metrical form?

In dealing with Infants we are compelled by their inability to read to teach by word of mouth. Unless the metre is overstressed in the process, as it often and most vilely is, they are capable of making verse vividly and individually their own. That is why so many children of six and seven speak it essentially better than those of eight and nine. Listening to the older ones—and it would be hypocritical to pretend that the difficulty automatically remedies itself in due course—one is vaguely and yet painfully aware that the large majority have not even begun to make what they are saying their own. We talk glibly about learning by heart, but learning by heart in the true sense is exceedingly rare: by brain, by memory, yes; by heart, which means by ear and feeling and understanding, no.

One may hear dozens of elocution candidates, scores of festival entries, many of them superficially accomplished, and yet meet never a one who

has truly learned by heart as distinguished from those who have learned only by practice, by thought, or—all too often—by imitation of a technically accomplished teacher. Then, sometimes, the rare one arrives. Perhaps two or three arrive in a row—and then one may be fairly sure that they are the product of the same teacher.

What is the difference? It is certainly not a matter of textual understanding. Very often the unsatisfactory ones could obviously explain every word—and probably have done so! Indeed, one feels that they would understand more if they knew less—while the rare ones may readily fall down over word meanings without in the least weakening one's belief in their real understanding.\*

Nor is the difference simply a matter of natural ability, for natural ability, or at least potentiality, is not infrequent in the less satisfactory. It is not even

\* Here, one would suggest, is the essence of the answer to the vexed question whether Shakespeare should be admitted to the youngish school. The stock argument of the antis is that children don't understand half of it; to which the answer is, firstly "Do we?", and secondly, "Is it not possible that they get something which we with our superior knowledge miss, that they may appreciate the rhythm of lines which they could not hope to scan—in short, that they achieve glories of their own?" Shakespeare's groundlings certainly did not "understand" him, yet they made life possible for him. They knew word music when they heard it, and stayed the poetic course without tears because they appreciated the fable Children can do as much, provided that they know the story. That, one would suggest, is rather more than half the battle.

enough to say that imagination has been awakened, for imagination is occasionally manifest in the comparatively unaccomplished. Nor will imagination plus technical equipment cover the matter, for, especially among older and more practised people, one not infrequently meets performers who have imagination, understanding, and technical accomplishment, and yet miss the true total effect. The difference lies in consistency. The rare ones, besides imagination, adequate understanding, and adequate technique, are masters of something which binds these things together and gives them consistency.

What that something is we will inquire later. It shows itself, technically, in the ability

(a) to handle the poem as a whole, starting it off at the right "pitch" and keeping it there, whatever the passing variations;

(b) to maintain the right pace in general and vary it in detail;

(c) to flow clearly but easily over unessential words and give revealing importance to the essential sense-word by emphasis of one sort and another;

(d) to preserve the rhythm and continuity of run-on lines by just the right swim on the last main syllable of the non-stopped line (suspension or suspensory pause);

(e) indefinitely yet quite obviously to appreciate the sound of the words as well as their literal sense: in short to show realization of the fact that the very essence of poetry is that it means more than it says;

(f) to command the right speech tune without fail and without exaggeration. This is the rarest of all the abilities. Exaggerated speech tunes are frequent, flattened ones more frequent still. But

one occasionally meets the real thing—even a child who can recite the passage of "Hiawatha," that severest of tests, with flexibility and unspoiled music and rhythm.

Are young children capable of such flights? They are. Indeed, age seems to have remarkably little to do with it. Are they capable of it even in speech choirs? They are, in the hands of the right teacher. Admittedly such accomplishment is extremely rare. The average speech choir shows regimentation all too plainly. Matter has obviously taken second place to manner. At its detestable worst, choral speech amounts to nothing more than a collection of effects: "orchestration," mechanical crescendo and diminuendo, *accelerando*, *ritard* and pause—the whole elocutionary bag of tricks carried to the last power of obviousness.

And yet, occasionally, a choir arrives in which one feels convinced that every member is living an individual life while yet collaborating as one of a team. Naturally its members are not of equal individual accomplishment—and one would not wish them to be, for the radical value of choral work is that it gives the less individually accomplished something to live for. What matters is that they are genuinely collaborating. They are not passengers.

Hearing a choir of that kind, one is aware beyond argument of the value of such work. The great thing to be aimed at is simplicity. And above all, the teacher must avoid imposing himself and so producing a regiment of eager and earnest parrots.

That, of course, is the most insidious of our temptations as teachers, whether our material is individual or multiple. The reason is obvious: we know the



result we want, and we have painfully little time to achieve it. By inducing children to copy us we can produce the maximum superficial effect in the minimum of time. But that does not alter the fact that the method is bad. The root of the matter, if anywhere, is in us, not in the children—and it is not destined for a long life. We shall not produce the rare ones simply by imitation.

They are the result of slow growth. They not only know the general meaning of what they are saying, and are imaginatively aware of it, but their ear is appreciative of the word music by which so much is expressed. That is the radical "something" mentioned earlier in this chapter. The rare ones are, in short, showing the benefit of speech training and of the ear training which is its foundation. Here, of course, the term "speech training" is used in the true and large sense, and it is well that we should return to that at the end of our study.

We have gone into much detail, and that is all to the good so long as we do not forget that speech is more than breath and vowels and consonants. However much attention those may need, we must still remember, and not allow our classes to forget, that speech is more than the sum of its component parts: that it is a queer amalgam of sounds, silences, music, tunes, nuances,

suggestion—curious and interesting in detail, magical in sum. A great deal of its effect lies between the lines. A great part, perhaps the best part, of our teaching will also be done between the lines, casually, in passing, perhaps almost unnoticed even by ourselves. That is really the difficulty of speech training: it is so indefinite and seemingly so slow. But it is important to realize that the slowness is much more apparent than real.

That, to the experienced teacher, is the encouragement of speech work. Its effect is cumulative. At first, when one is beginning, one can see little result, little to put one's finger on. Then, as if roots had been running underground, our work begins to send up green shoots. The results show in reading aloud—an art which is often regarded as being virtually unteachable, at least to large groups; in dramatic work; in composition; in a new and more lively sense of words; and in the reading of poetry. Silent reading also benefits, since the mind's ear is more alert. We may even leave children to choose their own poems and learn them from the printed page without fear of murder being committed in process.

Such results are worth working for. The great thing is to make a beginning, keep main aims clear ahead, and trust to human interest. We can be sure of results.

# USEFUL BOOKS

## GENERAL SPEECH TRAINING

ANNE McALLISTER:

*Primary Teacher's Guide to Speech Training* (University of London Press). Teachers' book covering Infant and Junior work.

*Steps in Speech Training* (U.L.P.). Five Junior speech-training readers based upon the author's broadcasts to Scottish schools.

RODNEY BENNETT:

*The Playway of Speech Training* (Evans Bros.). Teachers' book for Junior work, with comprehensive jingles.

*The First Steps in Speech Training* (Evans Bros.). Similar, but for teachers of Infants and younger Juniors. Jingles.

*Adventures in Words: Junior Series* (U.L.P.). Five class books, with jingles and reading matter, illustrated, each with a teacher's book corresponding, setting out a four/five years' course of work in lesson-by-lesson detail.

*Practical Speech Training for Schools* (U.L.P.). Teachers' book covering the general method of the above series.

CLIVE SANSOM:

*Speech and Rhymes* (A. and C. Black). Two books of traditional and modern rhymes, suitable for speech lessons with younger Juniors.

## SPEECH DEFECTS

IDA WARD:

*Defects of Speech* (Dent).

## POETRY AND CHORAL WORK

H. ADAMS and A. CROASDELL:

*Poetry Speaking Anthology: Part 2* (Methuen). Pupils' anthology for the Junior School, containing poems suitable for choral speaking.

M. GULLAN and P. GURREY:

*Poetry Speaking for Children: Book 2*, Revised edition (Methuen). Teachers' book explaining the choral speaking method for Junior classes.

MONA SWANN:

*An Approach to Choral Speech* (Macmillan). General suggestions on the formation of a speaking choir.

*Many Voices: Part 1* (Macmillan). An anthology of poems for choral speaking, for Junior age groups.

## GENERAL INTEREST

R. K. and M. I. R. POLKINGHORNE:

*Language and Speech Training Stories* (U.L.P.). Suitable for children of five to eight, especially for those who have pronunciation difficulties.

*A World of Sounds* (U.L.P.). Stories, each followed by rhymes concentrating on important sounds involved.

DANIEL JONES:

*An English Pronouncing Dictionary* (Dent).

SECTION THREE

**VARIED FORMS OF  
DRAMATIC WORK**

CHAPTER ONE

DRAMA AS A TEACHING MEDIUM

**W**HEN the question was put to a Brains Trust whether or not dramatic work should find a place in the school curriculum, a notably humourless member replied, "No. Children go to school to work, and there is so much to be done that dramatic work should not be taught." Whereupon, either through simple ignorance or because they were, like the present writer, overcome by the speaker's pontifical and omniscient manner, the rest of those present maintained silence, and the Question Master at once passed on to the next question after what must have been the shortest Brains Trust answer on record—and also one of the most wrong-headed and ignorant.

This attitude towards classroom dramatic work is not uncommon among parents and even among teachers. It is as if they instinctively leapt to this syllogism: "Children do not normally enjoy work. They obviously enjoy drama. Therefore dramatic activities cannot be called work."

It is this doggedly kill-joy attitude towards the school curriculum which causes the wrong inference to be so often drawn, and which caused the

brains-truster to offer an answer which was wrong only in its negatives, the true reply being, "Yes. Children go to school to work, and therefore, since dramatic activity provides one of the most powerful incentives, both communal and individual, it must be taught in the school."

It should be understood at once that this section treats drama almost entirely as a form of work. That does not mean that the recreative aspect is overlooked or underestimated, but merely that it is taken for granted. A certain proportion of children are keenly interested all the time dramatic work is in progress. The rest are keenly interested while they themselves are in action, but apt to flag when not—and we shall have to budget for them as we go along, since we cannot afford to have them wasting time or getting in the way, as bored children of any age inevitably do. A not insignificant point to notice is that the children whose interest is apt to be unreliable and intermittent are precisely those who are most often chosen to take part in end-of-term plays. They are not often in the long run the best actors, but they have a certain flair and facility, and can easily be screwed up to

concert pitch. Their interest, in short, is essentially exhibitionist: that is at once their quality and their limitation—and the same may be said of most of the shows in which they come into their own.

There is, of course, something to be said for the kind of plays which normally appear at the end of term and at school drama festivals. Provided that they are not dramatically contemptible, they have their uses. They are a shop window. Parents enjoy them, and so do many more children than are actively engaged in them. But that is usually as much as one can say. They are rarely creative, and they rarely represent more than small-group activity. They are not truly communal.

That, from our present point of view, is a radical defect. The argument cannot be too strongly stressed that *if school dramatic work is to be worth as much attention as these chapters claim, it must be creative and truly communal. It must provide an outlet not only for the bright few, but for the rank and file, not forgetting the dull ones, who not infrequently come into their own, however modest it may be, in dramatic work just as they do in speech training.*

That does not necessarily mean that they turn out to be good actors. They often do, they often do not. But by dramatic work we do not merely mean acting. The term covers all the varied activities which contribute to the presentation of a play, whether offered to the public or not, including the constructive discussions which give rise to those activities.

Unpredictability as to acting talent is by no means confined to less-bright children. Bright ones are also liable to

fail in performance. But they may be vastly valuable in other dramatic ways, and they themselves may be greatly benefited.

So much, indirectly, for the common assumption that all children are natural actors. They are not. Youthful "sticks" are less common than adult "sticks" because childhood is comparatively free from self-consciousness and self-importance, but there are numbers of children whom not the cleverest producer can turn into competent actors. There are even some who do not want to act, but—and here is what matters—with a little organization and astuteness we can find something worth while for them all to do, something which contributes indispensably to what the audience sees, something about which they can feel the kind of pride which provides a stimulus and good ground for a sense of responsibility and self-confidence. One of the things we can and must do is to make our classes feel that, important as the actors are, they are not the beginning and end. They are not more essential than the people whose work hides behind the scenes—the organizers, managers, prompters, even the "noises off." And emphatically they are less important than those who make the play.

One of the most delightful things about dramatic work is the frequency with which one discovers dark horses. As a result of care, patience, and sympathy, children may show talent which neither we nor they suspected—and the encouragement to them and their friends is not to be underestimated. It may be in acting, or it may be in some less spectacular capacity—that does not matter. What matters is to give children a sense of their value as respon-

sible helpers in a team activity working towards an artistic end. It takes a certain imagination to realize, but it is none the less true, that a dull child whose job is merely to see that hand props are returned to their proper place may derive as much imaginative satisfaction from dramatic work as his brighter brother who is playing prince. The combination of responsibility and imaginative still is what matters.

While discussing this matter of facility it will be apposite to discuss a question about which not a few teachers come to wrong conclusions: are boys as good as girls in dramatic work? The answer is that in some ways they are not as good, in other ways they are better. In short, they are different. They are commonly more difficult to get started, firstly because they are much more afraid of looking ridiculous, and secondly because they are less interested in imitating us, especially if "us" is a woman. But is the aim of teaching to get children to imitate us? If it is, then girls are superior. If, on the other hand, our aim is to get them to strike out on their own lines, the palm must usually go to boys. The encouraging thing about girls is that they are so willing to imitate; the discouraging thing is that they are less willing to "take one foot off the bottom" and strike out for themselves. That makes them easy to bring up to a certain standard, difficult to get beyond it. With boys it is the other way about. They are often maddeningly slow and gauche starters. But once launched they are capable of exciting flights. They remain slightly incalculable, but that makes them all the more fun to work with. Humour and tolerance are the clues to the riddle called boy. Once

get them laughing at themselves, and there is no end to their possibilities. There is also no end to the work they will do on their own initiative—and that is the key to a problem which it is now time to discuss.

### Drama in the Time-table

Classroom dramatic work is of two kinds, which may be called respectively reproductive and creative—play reading and play making. The first, which is valuable, gets comparatively quick results; the second, which is much more valuable, represents a slow growth. The question is often asked: how much school time will dramatic work take to achieve considerable results?

The answer falls into parts. The first is that, once dramatic work has established itself and shown its value, it will certainly absorb more time than is shown in the time-table. It will find its way, naturally and as an indispensable teaching medium, into periods devoted to scripture, history, and civics. It will figure still more largely in the time allotted to English literature and oral and written composition, and will take up some of the time given to silent reading, and almost all the time given to reading aloud. It will also make itself felt in periods devoted to speech training and arts and crafts, from drawing to needlework and carpentry. Even P.T. will not escape, for what is known as deportment will naturally claim some attention there.

And yet, however much time it takes in school, it will, if alive and healthy, certainly take much more out of school, for drama is one of those rare forms of work which children will take out of the classroom—into the playground and into the home—and still ask for

more. That is one of the most encouraging things about it. The reason, of course, is—and here is its real secret and fundamental recommendation—that it provides a purpose for varied work, a purpose which children can not only see but also approve with enthusiasm. There is no difficulty in getting them to work. The only difficulty is to keep them supplied with new material and to see that their activity has direction and is not merely repetitive.

It is sometimes said that children regard drama as simply play. That is not true. They rightly esteem the play motive, but they are also aware that it involves a great deal of sheer hard work, some of it not intrinsically entertaining. They will sometimes complain about this, but the point is that they go on. Even boys who normally groan at learning a few lines of verse, and do not, and cannot, do it well, will almost cheerfully memorize ten times the amount of prose, which is harder, for the sake of using it in a play. What is more, they will do it in their own time, and do it well. The result has life and spirit. It is living speech and also living poetry, history, Bible—whatever the material may be.

As to definite placing in the time-table, two weekly periods will do very well, and of these two one may well be the recreation period, which in so many schools turns part of Friday afternoons into a green oasis. Many children will ask for this, but a few prefer to do other things, and they should be allowed to do so, for it should be borne in mind that there is no need for all the class to engage in dramatic work at the same time. In fact much of it will be sectional, and will persist as a

kind of background and odd-minute activity.

Precise methods will be discussed in due course, but it may be useful to provide an immediate note on some of the subject applications mentioned above.

## Reading

Solo reading is perhaps the most generally ill taught of Primary School subjects, partly because its cultural value is insufficiently recognized, partly because, at least by old-fashioned methods, it is so fantastically difficult to teach. Indeed, it is not too much to say that in large classes it cannot be taught at all. A few children have the tick of it by nature, but for the rest what can we do besides teach them to pronounce a certain number of words correctly, and perhaps, by heart-breaking insistence, persuading them to abstain from turning at least some commas into full stops? Before accepting any such desolate conclusion it is worth while to ask certain questions.

First, is that kind of insistence worth while? Does it really do anything besides bore the children out of the possibility of liking reading? Is it a sound method, or merely superficial tinkering? After all, the same children whose reading is so deadly have a lively enough speech style at other times. Why can they not retain it in reading? Simply because they cannot "hear print." The difficulty is much less of eye than of ear. In short, the solution of the problem of solo reading lies in ear training. The only way to solve it is to enable children to hear print in terms of speech.

The steps usually taken towards this end are, to say the least of it, strange.

Too often the texts provided were never meant for reading aloud, and were not conceived by the writer in terms of speech. (As an extreme example one may cite Scott's prose, to make which sound even remotely like speech is an almost insuperable test of reading technique.) Is it any great wonder that average children fail so deplorably? They might progress better if we supplied them with printed words which were no more than concise speech caught on paper, thus enabling them to correlate the printed with the spoken word—which is precisely what dramatic dialogue does. The moral is too obvious to need stressing. All that need be said is that, from the point of view of solo reading, a set of dramatic readers is worth all the other class books put together. They may also be so used as to give new life to silent reading. But as that will be fully treated in a later chapter it may for the moment be passed over.

### Speech

Dramatic work is the most effective of incentives to clear speech. Children who normally mumble will speak out when playing a part. Also, observing for themselves that speakers who really use the mouth and lips are not only easier to hear but easier to look at, they tend to acquire a facial mobility which is otherwise by no means easy to get.

Dramatic work also produces what may be called realistic speech. As every wireless listener knows, many people, when reading from print or script, show only too obviously that they are reading, and not very well at that. Children are at least no better. As the paragraphs on solo reading suggested, dramatic books will work

wonders for this neglected art, but not even the best of them will ensure that every child makes print sound like life. Still less will it enable all of them to give life to the memorized word. Many, if left to themselves, will show all too plainly that their imagination and ear have not been sufficiently touched to give the authentic sound of reality to what they are saying. Some, with practice, will put this right for themselves when combining speech and action, and their reading and recitation will show all-round improvement. Others, especially girls, seem unable to step spontaneously from print to reality. Estimably but unmistakably they recite what they have learned—and this is almost as true of adults as of children. They may recite so well as to make the difference difficult to define, but it is none the less palpable and distressing. The printed word remains at the back of their minds—and the printed word is flat, lacking truth of intonation and variety of speed. For such as these, help is necessary.

We may choose an individual speech, even a single sentence, and ask the actor to repeat it. Then, "Is that how he would really say it?" we ask. After one or two attempts the player often corrects himself. If not, it is a good thing to ask if there is anyone who can show him what we mean—which is always better than doing the showing ourselves. However the improvement is achieved, we impress the principle: To say words clearly is not enough. They must sound like real life. If you want to act, you must listen how real people really do talk. Recitation ruins more dramatic productions than any other common fault.

The same question may be usefully

put to the class in general form: "The players are saying their lines very well. They know their words. Some sound as if they were making them up as they go. What they say sounds to be coming straight from their minds. That is just what we want. But do they all sound like that, or is there anyone who sounds as if he were reciting—reciting very well, but still reciting? Listen to those last few lines again and judge for yourselves." The answer is usually given correctly, and then we counter with the question, "What is the difference, then?" That, of course, is difficult, and we shall not expect a neat and conclusive answer. What we shall get is the kind of discussion which, besides being good oral composition, represents speech training at its best.

In the same way we can do a great deal to stimulate the kind of acute listening needed for a degree of speech differentiation which can hardly be achieved in the speech class. Many children's plays cover a wide social range: townspeople contrasted with countrymen, kings with woodcutters. In practice-casting it is good policy to give the king's part to a boy who, however suitable in action, is something less than regal in speech style. In due course we say, "Brown is playing well, but do you think he sounds as kingly as he acts?" The class's answer is ruefully accepted by Brown as acute criticism, and we follow on with a principle of which many adult societies never seem to have realized the truth: "It is all very well to act with your arms and legs, but you must act with your speech and voice as well. It is of no use putting on a crown or even altering your face with paint and whiskers if your speech doesn't change

too. It just doesn't fit. So, Brown—if you can't sound a bit more kingly next time, you can be third footman."

We may then ask the class, "What can be done about it? Has anyone any detailed suggestions: sounds he might alter or anything like that?" Whatever the method, we can be sure that, rather than lose the chance of the part, Brown will pay more analytical attention to his speech during the next week than he would normally pay in a year. Whether he will maintain the regality when he doffs the purple is another question: what matters is that he has put in the necessary thought and listening, besides accepting the principle of the possibility of speech modification. He has, in short, given the class some practical ear training and himself more—and ear training is never wasted.

Similarly, when we have contrasted groups, we may raise the question, "Would the Shepherds and the Wise Men speak quite alike? No? Then what shall we do about it?" Usually, in districts where a local dialect is prevalent, the answer will be to make the Shepherd speak it, while the Wise Men try for something nearer standard English—which is at once sound drama and excellent speech training.

### Oral Composition

Although the educational value of oral composition is generally recognized, it is ordinarily less practised than it deserves. The chief reason is that it is far from easy to hit upon subjects which will stimulate the ordinary child as distinguished from those more fluent ones who are ready to discuss anything, or nothing, in season and out. As we shall see in a later chapter, discussion forms a radical part of even the



simplest form of dramatic work, providing subjects upon which every child wants to express an opinion.

The application to written composition, though less obvious, is not less real. As teachers we take great pains over written composition, but few regard the results as being very satisfactory. Few children, for all our trouble, master the art of transferring words to paper without killing them, and fewer still do so with enough gusto to achieve the beginnings of an individual style.

As most authors know, the surest way of testing one's work is to read it aloud, and, as children very quickly learn, the surest way of testing their skill is to have a piece of their own dramatic dialogue acted. They hear for themselves that what looked well enough on paper may not sound well enough in speech. They realize that their mind's ear is not always as discriminating as their physical ear. What is even more useful, they are not slow in appreciating the fact that failure is of various easily recognizable kinds: too many words; wrong words; right words in wrong places. Appreciating this, doctoring what they have written and noting the resulting improvement, they learn in the most practical way that the major problems of composition are of exactness and order, which between them cover not only lucidity but rhythm; that, as Swift put it, "Proper words in proper places make the true definition of a style."

All this is merely another way of saying that success in writing depends firstly upon having something to say, secondly upon wanting to say it, and thirdly upon developing a keen enough ear to enable it to be said with the utmost economy and in the right order. The third is largely a matter of practice, various forms of which will be suggested in due course.

## Organization

To finish this chapter brief mention may be made of various matters which, in spite of their obvious importance, are mentioned in no school time-table. To prepare even the simplest classroom play may need not only discussion but research, especially among pictures, which should be undertaken with all due seriousness by selected children. To bring the production to a successful conclusion will call for more than a little organization, which may be defined as foreseeing possible difficulties and making orderly plans to forestall them. Someone must hold responsibility for everything, and must learn to take it.

An important part of the technique of classroom dramatic work is to spread responsibilities as widely as possible. Another is to leave what may be grandiosely called managerial responsibility as far as possible to selected children, who, in exercising it, will learn a great deal about managing themselves and other people—valuable things for any age to know.

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS

**T**HOUGH school dramatic work has made great strides during recent years, it has still far to go. The two major obstacles which it has to overcome are the old-fashioned but persistent idea that it is a frill rather than a form of work, and the conviction felt by many able teachers that it is a mysterious subject which needs special aptitudes and training to undertake.

The first idea was discussed fully enough in the last chapter; the second must now be inspected. To a certain extent it is true. Special aptitudes are essential. Important among them are a taste and ear for speech, a sense of the dramatic, and a knowledge of children and how to handle them. Many teachers possess these. Another important qualification is what may be called a streak of youthfulness, but this again is common, and there is nothing like dramatic work for bringing it out. An eye for colour, and that sense of balance which is at the bottom of design, are also important—more important, indeed, than is generally recognized; but these again are not uncommon, and may be greatly quickened by practice and experiment. A fair knowledge of dramatic literature and method is helpful, which can be acquired by reading and from the theatre, and not only the professional theatre.

These are radical qualifications. They are not uncommon, and are by no means confined to teachers of English.

Indeed, some of the best school dramatic work the present writer has seen was conducted by a science mistress and a woodwork teacher, both of whom had taken it up, with a good deal of diffidence and out of school hours, simply because it interested them.

Above all, of course, we have at our disposal what is absolutely indispensable for a mastery of classroom dramatic work: a classroom and a set of children in it. Books on dramatic technique may be useful, and drama schools of the kind run by the British Drama League and many education authorities may be very useful indeed; but the fact remains that there is only one way of learning about classroom dramatic work, and that is by doing it. The great thing is to make a start and then watch what happens. There is much to be learned, and children can be depended upon to teach us much of it.

Young teachers often ask whether the freedom necessary for dramatic work may not involve them in difficulty over discipline. The answer is that if the work is run on common-sense lines the question simply does not arise. There will sometimes be moments of noise and hilarity, but they are the result of excited interest, a different thing from disorder. Indiscipline is almost always the result of lack of interest and of outlet for physical energy, both of which dramatic work supplies

## THE TEACHER'S QUALIFICATIONS

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n abundance. Children quickly become much too absorbed to be troublesome.

Doubt of another kind is often expressed by teachers who are not conscious of any personal ability to act. This is less of a defect than might be supposed. Indeed, it is not easy for teachers who are themselves good actors to keep sufficiently in their proper place, which is the background, and to let the brunt of the work be borne by the proper people, the children. It is so much easier to say, "Do it like this," or "Say it like this," than to elicit the desired result by encouraging thought and observation and by appealing to imagination; and the danger is increased by the fact that it is easy to get quick results by encouraging mere imitation.

In practice many people discover unsuspected ability in acting. Though they might not be able to sustain a part, they find that on the spur of the moment they can give a thoroughly good exposition of what they want. This is, of course, exhilarating—so greatly so, indeed, as to incline them towards the ranks of those who begin with a consciousness of acting ability: they tend to "show" too much, and to overlook the fact that the imitative method is radically bad. It is the children who should do the work, not we. One of the virtues of dramatic work is that it encourages initiative, resourcefulness, and constructive thinking; and by encouraging imitation except as a last resort we cut its roots. If there is any "showing" to be done, it is generally best to let children do it. There is almost always someone who can see

what we want and demonstrate it if only we have patience to let them try, and to recognize that in the long run less haste will certainly mean more speed.

The same argument applies to play making. Many people question their ability to make a success of play making because they doubt if they could write a play themselves—and here the doubt is justified. Play writing is a highly specialized and difficult process, and many fewer people can write plays than do in fact write them. Nine out of ten amateur plays are, quite frankly, hopeless. But, as we shall see later, play writing and play making are different matters. The ability to appreciate a dramatic situation when one sees it, and to recognize the difference between dramatic and undramatic dialogue when one hears it, is much commoner than the facility to create dramatic situations and dialogue on paper; and for every one teacher who can write a play worth acting there are hundreds who are capable of guiding children through highly productive and instructive experiments in play making on the lines suggested in later chapters.

So much, then, for the teacher's qualifications and place in classroom dramatic work. It may be summarized in a sentence: He should be neither playwright nor leading actor, but simply the unobtrusive producer.

Since to the uninitiated the word "producer" carries a certain air of mystery, reminiscent of the conjurer producing rabbits out of hats, it will be as well to devote a very brief chapter to the explosion of that myth.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE IDEA OF "PRODUCTION"

THIS is not the place to discuss in detail what production of a stage play entails. The teacher who is showing a play in public will naturally need to make a more thorough job of it than would be necessary in the classroom, but there are several useful books, mentioned in the final book-list, which explain all that is necessary. But even if we have no idea of public performance, it is still worth while, except with the smallest children, to presuppose the presence of spectators and to look at things from their angle.

Now, from the audience's point of view, a play is something to be heard and seen, and we must do all we can to make our performance easy on both ear and eye. That sounds obvious, yet it is, in fact, the first and basic principle of production—and like a good many other obvious principles it is frequently forgotten.

The audience knows nothing about the story, or the idea, or the characters, or even who is who. As soon as possible they must be clear about everything that matters, and at the end of the performance they must be in full possession of the whole story. This obviously entails consistent and easy audibility. All players must speak out clearly, especially during their first minute or two, when their voices are unfamiliar. Muttering is the commonest cause of dissatisfaction in audiences.

But easy audibility means more than

clearness. It means naturalness, for one thing. Children intent on clearness are apt to recite their lines—and reciting kills dramatic effect, even when it is not desperately slow. One of the producer's chief jobs in dealing with children is to get them to speak not only clearly and at good speed, but in character and with an effect of spontaneity. Also, they must be encouraged to discriminate between unimportant lines and those which are essential from the point of view of plot. These must be made to stand out saliently.

Next let us consider visibility. At its simplest this means that the audience wants to see all the players who are on the stage, all the time. Somehow or other we must overcome children's tendency to mask and be masked. Downstage players must be taught not to get between the audience and upstage players, who in their turn must be taught, if they find themselves masked, to move. In view of this principle of visibility it becomes obvious that lines of players at right angles to the footlights simply will not do, since to a large part of the audience only the front child will be visible.

Consistent visibility is good, but it is only a beginning. Every play is a series of major pictures joined by minor ones. In other words, it is a series of groups, all of which must be interesting. They must also be varied. To have two or three major groups practically alike

means dullness. Grouping is a fascinating part of production. It needs careful and exact planning ahead, and the children need careful coaching in positioning. But once they understand the principles, and realize that even the most unimportant super is a part of the picture, they develop adaptability and resource.

In planning groups it is well to remember that straight lines, especially straight lines parallel with the footlights, are less interesting than arcs, and that arcs are less interesting than zig-zags. Also, that the whole stage must be used. The two commonest grouping mistakes are to use the back corners too much—not interesting positions—and the front corners too little. If we keep front corners well in mind we shall ensure good broad groups, and incidentally give our stage the maximum effect of depth.

Many plays contain a scene in which various characters have to speak to a seated dignitary, such as a Judge or King. A very common fault is to seat the said dignitary at the middle of the back. This means that a great deal of speaking will be directed upstage, to the audience's dissatisfaction. The obvious position for kings' thrones and such is at an angle at one side of the stage, as far down as convenience allows.

In crowd scenes it is advantageous if some characters, especially those at the

back, can be raised above stage level, on steps, rostrums, or even mineral-water crates.

One word about acting. Except when engaged in vigorous action, few children have much idea of how to produce that effect of plausibility and realism which it is the chief aim of acting to achieve. They tend merely to stand about and exchange speeches. In real life, except when chatting in streets, people rarely stand about and exchange speeches. Especially when at home, they tend to talk while doing this and that. A not unimportant part of the producer's job is to invent the necessary this and that for them to do—what is known as "business." If we give our actors natural things to do, whether they are charwomen or fairies, we are half-way to getting the best out of them, alike in speech and in characterization.

All the statements made in this brief résumé seem very obvious—and they are. All the same, anyone who understands the principles underlying them is well on the way to being an effective producer. Another thing is that they are simple matters of common sense. But producing is largely a matter of common sense based upon artistic and dramatic instinct. We apply the same few principles over and over again, with variations. That ought to make producing a tedious business. But in fact, for people with the right kind of mind and patience, it is endlessly fascinating.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# MAKING A BEGINNING

### The Use of Dramatic Readers

**W**HAT is the best way for an inexperienced teacher to launch an inexperienced class upon dramatic work in the full sense, play making as well as play reading? There are various ways, which will be discussed individually. As the use of dramatic readers is the simplest, if the necessary books are available, we may discuss that first; but it should be noted that much of what is said in this chapter about general method, and all that is said about the teacher's attitude, is equally applicable to other approaches.

### Choosing Dramatic Readers

There are various graded series of dramatic readers at present on the market. Some are good, but enough are not good to make it worth while to consider what to look for in choosing material of this kind. What we want is not a supply of neat little plays suitable for displaying to parents at the end of term, but plenty of real classroom material—and there is much which, while admirably serving our present purpose, could not possibly be adapted effectively to stage limitations.

The first essential in a class dramatic reader is that the majority of its items shall occupy at least a quarter of the class, while some should enable the whole class to join in, possibly out of doors. A few may be designed for

small-group work, but not more than a few, or, try as we will, we shall be in danger of exalting the facile few over the less facile many. That is the commonest fault in dramatic work, and it is inexcusable.

Another essential is that there shall be few stage directions. If there are next to none, as in a Shakespeare text, so much the better. The necessary movements, etc., are almost always deducible from the dialogue, so why should we rob children of a form of mental exercise which, though it is exacting, they are ready and willing to undertake?

The third essential, of course, is that the dramatic material shall be worth intensive use, and avoid the rather frothy whimsey-whamsey which characterizes so many Junior plays. In spite of theorists, modern children probably have as much use for fairies as their forbears had, but it is a pity to give them the impression that drama begins and ends in Never-never Land.

### First Reading

For the class's first experiment in dramatic reading it is advisable to choose a short play which occupies not less than a quarter of the class, and preferably a half. Starting as we mean to go on, by letting the children bear the brunt of the work, we set them to read their first play silently and without preparation, simply saying: "Here is a

play. Read it through. Try to picture the people and hear them talking. Make a list of their names, and decide which part you would rather play. And of course get the story clear in your mind. Then we might act it."

The last inducement does the trick. Even children who lack the concentration necessary for the efficient silent reading of a single non-dramatic page will enthusiastically plough through a short play, overlooking the fact that it is very hard work indeed. With nothing to help us but terse dialogue, we have to deduce a story, a background, and a whole set of people, complete in character, motive, appearance, and speech style. In so doing we have to use not only common sense but also aural and visual imagination, and that with considerable intensiveness.

## Preparatory Talk

Presently we shall go on to reading aloud, but first we shall promote as much preparatory discussion as we feel will be discreet. The first move is to get the story told. Now, telling the story of a play is notoriously difficult. Our best plan is to use relay narration, which is a good exercise and calculated to keep the whole class on its toes: "First we must get the story clear. I will set you going, and then call on someone to take over for a bit, and then someone else, and so on—so keep wide awake, or you may be lost if I call on you. 'Once upon a time there was a man who lived in a . . .'" and so on: set the scene vividly, start the action, and then hand over to a succession of children, merely giving enough help to keep the narrative on a reasonably direct course. By the time the end is reached the whole class will have

collaborated in a difficult and valuable exercise, at least by attending closely. They may not have realized the difficulty, but it will be politic to rest them and refresh their memories by re-reading, this time aloud.

## Second Stage

Choose children to read parts, adding that you will switch over to others as they go. Let the children sit in their places for this reading. The instruction this time is: "Don't just read like yourself. Think who you are supposed to be, and try to sound like that." In other words, the aim is to get them to act a little with the voice. Some will succeed, others will not, but all will be following alertly in the hope of being called upon to take a turn.

Changes of readers should be made with the least possible interruption. We are not taking the play to pieces yet, but merely strengthening the narrative outline and underlining a few main points by judicious comments, such as "Duke, that is a very important line. Why? . . ." or: "The Highwayman would sound angrier there, wouldn't he? Why? . . . Go on, Highwayman, once again, very angry indeed."

A few intonations will need attention, a few stresses increasing, but not too much should be attempted at this stage.

The end of the second reading is the time for various important talks which will take place in the course of every play we do. The gambit for the first is: "Wouldn't it be fine to do this play on a really good stage with first-class scenery! We can't, but we can pretend. Suppose we could have just the scenery we liked, what should we have? What would the scene be, and what furniture should we have, and where should we

put it?" And off we go on oral composition and discussion, recording our decisions on a blackboard ground plan which the children will copy when complete.

We do the same thing for a few of the costumes, splashing on the verbal colours lavishly.

Characters also call for brief discussion. "What do you think of the Highwayman? What kind of fellow is he really?" and so on—not too much of it, but as much as the class will stand without flagging.

The discussions on scenery and costume may well spill over into a drawing lesson, some children drawing a coloured picture of the stage—an experiment which often produces surprisingly vivid results—others attempting a sketch of a character in costume. If, later, a stage model can be made, so much the better. It does not matter how simple it is. Brightness and practicability are what matter.

Discussions may produce lively results in the next composition lesson.

We can't have scenery and dresses like that of course. But that does not matter. If we tell the audience what to imagine, they will do the rest. How would it be to have someone come in front of the curtain and say: 'Ladies and gentlemen, please imagine that the scene is a . . .' John, come out and try. Make a picture in words."

John's first attempt at word-picture making, a most valuable form of composition, will probably not get far beyond enumeration: "Ladies and gentlemen, please imagine that the scene is a cottage. There is the table with three chairs, and three basins and spoons on it. There is a door leading to outside. That one leads to the kitchen,

and that one to the stairs. At the back is a window."

"Yes," we say, "that would help, but there wasn't much colour, was there? What colour is the table cloth? What colours are the basins, and the curtains? Colour does help so. What kind of weather is it? Is the sun shining? What can you see through the windows? Are there any flowers? Someone else try. Make it as clear as John's, but brighter. Jane, come along."

Before long, as a result of individual attempts and class contributions, we may achieve something like this:

"Ladies and gentlemen, please imagine that this is a room in a little cottage. It is pretty to look at, and as neat as a new pin. There is the table with a blue-and-white check cloth on it, like the window curtains, and three white basins with a blue line round. One is large, one medium, and one small. Each has a spoon beside it. There are three chairs too, one is large, one medium, and one is small.

"There are three doors as well. That one leads to the kitchen, that one to the stairs, and that one out of doors to the forest. You can see the forest through the window. It must look very deep and dark on dull days, but it isn't dark today. The morning sun is shining in, and a bee is buzzing among the flowers on the sill.

"It sounds as if there is someone in the kitchen. I wonder who it can be? And someone is coming down the stairs. Watch and see who it is."

The improvement is obvious. The first is a bare outline. The last has clarity, shape, detail and colour—everything which distinguishes vivid composition from half-visualized routine. Hearing the result grow, the



whole class has had a lesson in visualization; and we can ensure that everyone makes the result his own in this way: "Now, before the picture fades, write it down. Everyone. Quickly, in pencil. It won't be word for word the same, of course, but that doesn't matter. Hear it in your ear and see it too, and write down what you hear and see. Then we will vote for the best, and have it spoken before our play."

So far we have covered a good deal of ground. We have had something thoroughly read twice—itsself no mean achievement—and made it the basis for oral and written work. Far from being weary, the class is eager for further concentration, buoyed up by the promise that in the next lesson the play shall be acted.

## First Acting

The lesson arrives for the first acting, and we choose, or better still let the class choose, people to read the chief parts, and then call on as many more as we need for crowd or whatever it may be. It would be handier to choose a small-cast play, but convenience is outweighed by the advantage of allowing as many as possible to join in the fun. After collecting the audience to the middle seats and telling them that as soon as this set has finished they shall have their turn, we call beginners to make the first group. "Imagine that we have curtains. The audience is waiting on the other side, and when the curtains go back they want to see something good. Are we ready? Mary, your introduction was chosen. Go out in front and read it out. Don't shout, of course, but let the deaf old gentleman in the back row hear every word."

Mary reads her home-made introduction. "Curtain!" we say, and then, "Well, Audience, what do you think of that for a group?"

Usually the audience thinks remarkably little of it, and rightly, for nine times out of ten this first group is just a muddle. After taking a suggestion or two and sorting out the group very quickly indeed, we take a seat in the audience and say, "Now we will start. Speak, actors, and move about just as you think. Do anything you like. Don't be afraid of mistakes. Mistakes don't matter."

At this point it will be politic to warn the inexperienced teacher that in spite of this exhortation the result will probably be so dreadful as to suggest that classroom reading-acting is hopeless. Most of the actors just stand about and read, missing the most obvious and essential moves, turning their backs on the audience, and going into private huddles. Now and then a child tries to act—and loses his place dismally. It is so bad that one is sorely tempted to leap into the fray with "That won't do. Look here . . ." This temptation must be resisted. Interference is fatal. Let them muddle through. Realize that, unlikely as it appears, some of the actors are undergoing a vivid imaginative experience. Besides, improvement will come with a rush. All that matters at present is to say "Curtain!" cheerfully, adding: "Not so bad for a first try. I thought that part about (whatever it was) was the best. They turned their backs on us rather a lot, but they will get over that. Now you others, take your turn. You ought to have picked up a good deal from seeing Team One. Thank you, Team One. Come and sit down and be audience. Go ahead,

Team Two . . . Are you ready? Jack, read your piece. . . . Curtain up!"

Team Two probably will be better than Team One, but not much. However, we shall once more abstain from any but the slightest comment, and that encouraging. Patient forbearance of this kind is not easy, when one is eager for progress, *but it must be managed. Eventual and complete success depends largely upon this first step being discreetly taken.* The saying about more haste meaning less speed is never more apt than in this connection, where the establishment of the right friendly atmosphere is of paramount importance.

### Demonstration

Once the dismal first attempts have been borne, we can safely go on to a discreet amount of demonstration and argument: "Theatrical companies always have a producer—someone who tells the players what to do when they get muddled. I am not going to be producer often—you are the ones who have to do the work—but just for this once I will be. You may pick up a few ideas. Afterwards you shall choose your own producers, and the producers shall 'pick up' for teams. All right, pick me a team and I will see what I can do."

Then, when the team is selected. "Now, actors, audience too, just forget about me. If I think someone ought to move, and he doesn't, I shall wheel him where I want him. But unless I ask you to stop, go straight on talking. Don't take any notice."

And the amusing thing is that one will be taken at one's word, even though one stays on stage all the time. An actor needs moving—one gets behind him, takes him by the

shoulders, and "wheels" him to where he ought to be. Meanwhile he doggedly goes on reading, the audience steadily watching him, not the producer. Perhaps he needs to kneel. One presses heavily on his shoulders. He resists stoutly. "Go down!" one growls quietly, and his knees sag. No one smiles. It is even possible to take an actor's free arm and make him gesticulate, but still he goes on and no one notices. It is a curious and amusing experience, all very quiet and not quite real.

Occasionally one says, "Good!" quietly, or takes the audience into one's confidence: "That's better, don't you think? The group was bunchy before." Perhaps the reader stops for a moment, perhaps not; the audience murmurs acquiescence, and the performance goes on its leisurely way. One realizes afresh what curious creatures children are, and of what absorption they are capable when interested.

### Teams and Leaders

Brief demonstration completed, it is time to establish a routine. Ask the class to name about six people who seem likely to make good team captains—equal numbers of boys and girls in a mixed class. Class instinct is good in this matter. Among the leaders suggested there are almost always at least one or two who, on account of excessive energy and a tendency to what children call bossiness, are apt to be nuisances. That is good. They are almost always effective. Their faults become virtues, and are curbed and disciplined by legitimate exercise.

From this select band of leaders as many are chosen as the present occa-

## MAKING A BEGINNING

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sion demands. They come to the front, "pick up" for their principals, and apportion the rest between them as extras. If they leave themselves out of the cast, express approval, pointing out that it is better for the producer not to act in his own show. But such abstinence is rare, and it is better not to make a fixed rule about it.

The instruction is: "Next Tuesday (or whatever the day is to be) you shall toss up for start and we will see what you have made of it between now and then. Producers ought to be able to fit in a little coaching. You won't have time to learn your parts, of course, but you may like to learn a bit here and there where the book gets in the way."

Especially if books are available out of school hours, as unfortunately they so often are not, a surprising amount of preparation will be managed. A good deal of memorization will also be done, for of course the advice not to learn was pure guile, intended to put the idea into their heads. Now and always it will be found that many children, and often the most unlikely ones, will memorize quantities of which they would in the ordinary way be incapable, simply so that they may give more lustrous performances and not miss what other people are doing. This rule about memorization being purely optional should be permanent and emphatic; there is nothing like it for getting a rather boring part of the work done without protesting groans.

### The Teams Begin

The day arrives. The producers toss. We suggest to the winner that he will probably prefer to wait till last, so that he may profit by watching the others.

This invitation is never accepted. Often it is obviously regarded as being too fantastic even to call for answer. Winners go first: that is universal.

It is at this point that one meets the need, already mentioned, of budgeting for those whose interest is liable to flag. Of course they ought to be willing to attend to further repetitions, if only for the sake of ideas which might benefit their own performance, but some are not, and never will be. After all, it is not surprising: they have already heard the play several times and discussed it in some detail, and nothing we can do will make them interested again until their turn comes to act. That being so, it is advisable to treat further repetitions as group activities concerning only those immediately engaged and those others whose interest is insatiable—to how to the inevitable at once and gracefully:

"I should think some of you are getting tired of this play by now, so you need not attend unless you like. If you would rather, you may read," or write or do spelling corrections or whatever it may be. "If there is anything you specially ought to see, I will give you a call, and then you can go on again with whatever you are doing." Actually this system produces a high percentage of listening. One frequently notices children who begin other work and then attend for considerable spells, merely returning to other occupations for occasional refreshment.

The first team begins. Perhaps the producer acts a part himself—in which case it is usually the chief part; but sometimes he is content to copy us and act as producer on the stage, for which he should be commended. Almost cer-

tainly it will be noticed that very considerable improvements have been effected, and these should be praised. Interruption of that kind is never resented. Occasionally it is worth while to call on the other-workers in the audience: "This is worth seeing. Just go over that piece again, Producer. . . . Thank you. All right, go on with what you were doing."

From time to time, on the other hand, there are things which could easily be improved. Here, again, the temptation to intrude should be resisted. Much better to say, "Producer, just a minute," make the suggestion privately—even though audibly enough for the whole company to overhear, as they certainly will if we pretend that they are not supposed to—and leave him to carry it out in his own way.

### The Teacher's Attitude

Courtesy of this kind is immensely appreciated, and quickly helps us to the reputation which we should be at pains to build up: that of the ideal audience, the person who appreciates every good point, and who is always liable to have a practicable idea up his sleeve, though he is liable to keep it to himself unless asked. This calls for patience and self-restraint, but it pays eventual dividends. The intrusive method may produce quicker immediate results, but in the long run, and in real educational returns, it simply does not pay.

Children are so suspicious of interference from above, and are so tired of it, that at first they rarely consult us. But surprisingly quickly, if we cultivate the right reputation, that attitude changes. Before long we shall have the

producer saying, "Sir, I can't get this bit right. What would you do?" The answer should, as always, be given quasi-privately. Next we may possibly get the request, "Sir, I can't get this right. I wish you would have a go." That is a step, and may well lead to the final compliment of producers consulting us, not merely during performance but beforehand, privately: "Sir, what do you think of this for an idea?" When that stage arrives we are justified in regarding ourselves as hundred-percent successes, in sight of turning dramatic work into the tremendously effective and comprehensive educational instrument which it can so easily become.

### Established Routine

By the time our first play is done with, a routine will have been built up which will serve throughout the whole course of dramatic reading:

- (a) the play is read silently;
- (b) it is narrated and discussed with stress on its visual aspect;
- (c) it is read again, sitting;
- (d) teams are chosen, and group work follows.

Obviously this is a routine not of play but of work, much of it of an intensive-ness for which in any other context we should struggle in vain. Every member of the class reads a piece of print nominally three times, but in fact considerably more than that, discusses it, uses it. Even considered only as reading matter, dramatic readers are the most rewarding type of class text. They last the class much longer than any other kind of book. Further, they produce purposeful talk and discussion and

other forms of allied activities. Perhaps most important of all, they promote much out-of-school work. This surprises the beginner, but one soon comes to take it for granted, and to realize that there is nothing like dramatic work for getting children to work hard and with gusto, in school and out, individually and collectively, collaborating together as teams, the leaders and the led.

## Class Drama Festivals

And so far we have hardly begun. It is easy with a little planning to get much more work out of our material than we have yet attempted, and to leave more and more to the children themselves.

One good way is to say at a suitable point in the first term: "It is a pity we can't put the finishing touches to any of our plays in class. Some of the work you are doing is too good to leave bitty. But we just haven't time. How would you like to have a Drama Festival at the end of term? Choose any of the plays we do that specially strikes you—it doesn't matter if several teams choose the same one—and give it an extra polish in private. Then we might vote for the one or two best in case any other classes would like to compare notes in the hall. You needn't make hard work of it. For instance, you needn't learn your part unless you wish. It is quite in order to have your book in your hand."

This last is again guileful. We can be quite sure that the majority of the children will reject the concession on their own initiative, and that their producers would have something to say about it if they didn't.

If the whole-school festival matures, it is advisable to keep it as far as pos-

sible non-competitive: to have some knowledgeable and understanding person comment constructively on each performance on its own merits.

It is also feasible to have a whole-year festival on the same lines, for it is extraordinary how children retain interest in a piece of dramatic work of which they are proud.

## Bringing on the Backward Children

Before the first month has passed the class will automatically have sorted itself out into two groups: those whom producers want if they can possibly get them, and the rest. It is important not to accept this division as inevitable or just. In all probability some of the second choices, even some of the last choices, are potentially as good as the commonly chosen few. They are merely slow starters, or shy, or inclined to be inarticulate. The problem is to find the best means of setting them on their feet.

One way is to have those stand up who have not yet had a good part, and to instruct producers to choose principals for the next play from them. The trouble with that is that it is somewhat diastic, and that it makes the second-raters feel conspicuous.

A better method is to say, "I don't see why the other producers should have all the fun. This time I am going to share in the pick-up," and then to choose a complete cast of unlikelies. The astonishment on the faces of the other producers at one's persistent wrongheadedness is comical to see, and should be mentioned in private to the completed cast: "Some people were surprised at my choosing some of you, because you haven't had a good part yet. Of course we shall have to work

hard, and we will do it on the quiet; but we'll show them—if you are game to work overtime." They are game—and the gain in confidence is rewarding, even if one's work does not result in any notable discovery of talent, as it often does. Besides, the result is fairly certain to impress the rest of the class greatly, for though it may not really be very distinguished, it will certainly better expectation enough to cause enthusiasm—and incidentally to put up one's stock as a producer.

The effect of this plan is much increased by taking the best of the child-producers into one's confidence beforehand and suggesting his joining in the plot to a modified extent: "I am going to choose entirely unlikelies. You had better not do that or they will smell a rat, but you might consider A and B and C, for example. I believe you could make something of them if you put yourself to it. Don't tell anyone, of course. This is our secret."

The next step is to call all producers into conference and put the matter to them: "We are getting into a groove. It isn't quite playing the game to let the same people have the best parts each time. The rest may not be so good, but they deserve a look in. Besides, some of them are better than we think. You noticed C and D in my company. They were a surprise, weren't they? In future I want you each to choose one or two unlikelies each time. You know who they are, so I leave it to you. What you make of them will show what you can do." Such argument always works, for children are remarkably decent when given a lead. Before long each producer will have his protégés and be proud of them—and the benefit is not only to the protégés.

### Memorization

Memorization is best done in the course of rehearsal with movement. But a certain amount will have to be done in private, and it is worth while to see that it is done effectively. For most people the best way of learning lines is to repeat them aloud. But whether aloud or silently, they should always be said as in performance, with the correct intonation and at the correct speed. Gabbling in memorizing almost always shows in performance, even if the change of tempo does not produce uncertainty.

Speeches should be learnt as a whole, and not sentence by sentence, or they are liable to fall to pieces.

The cue, that is the four or five words leading into one's own speech, should always be spoken aloud in memorization, so that response becomes automatic; and the rule should be impressed: "Whatever else in your speech goes wrong, you must give the correct cue. That is only fair to the next speaker."

About a week before public performance it is a good plan to have one's cast sit round and to hand out cues to them out of order. At first they are paralysed, but after a little while they begin to gain flexibility, and before long they are snapping in on their lines with an immediacy which contributes greatly to successful performance. This kind of cue jumping not only makes for safety, but is a sure way of finding out weak joins, which can then be strengthened by returning to them several times.

The last rule to impress has already been mentioned: "Good stage dialogue does not sound like something that has been learned. It sounds like the real

thing. We don't want any reciting, thank you."

So much, then, for the most circumscribed use of dramatic readers. If we go no further we shall have done much, but not to strike out on new and parallel lines is to miss much pleasure and profit. Besides, it is arbitrary. Even the simplest dramatic work suggests experiments and fresh lines of work which are well worth trial. Some of them will presently be considered. Incidentally, they will suggest means of launching dramatic work where dramatic readers are not yet available.

## Dressing Up

Before classroom dramatic work has gone far one is certain to receive the somewhat diffident request—and curiously and revealingly it almost always comes from the boys: "Sir, could we dress up a bit?"

This request, which we have of course instigated with our talk about costumes, should nevertheless be received with a certain calculated frosti-

ness: "Well, if you really want to, I don't *mind*—but it won't have to take any time. We have work to do. Of course, a few things would be nice—a good bright train for kings, and an old lace curtain for queens and brides and things, and a few headdresses perhaps. But you will have to supply them yourselves, and they will have to be kept dead orderly in a box and properly listed. Don't expect me to tidy up after you."

These conditions are accepted with gratitude, and the dramatic class gains in vividness and from the point of view of applied art. But always, even when the making of properties has added new life to the craft class, the wearing of costumes should be treated as if on sufferance, for this attitude ensures economy of time and maximum orderliness. Children ought to see through the ruse, but they never do; and the Wardrobe Mistress and her Assistant—preferably two children low on the acting rota—revel in method and written lists, for this is the kind of rignarole which children love.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# MIME

**F**ORMALIZED mime to music can be valuable and delightful, but it is too technical a matter to be more than mentioned here. The most that can be said is that occasionally in the P.T. class, or at some other time when space is available, it is useful to divide the class into two groups and say, "Listen to this piece of music. It may suggest movement to you. Group 1, up you get and walk about suitably, briskly or lazily, whichever fits the music. Then if you want to do more than that, do it one by one, or in twos and threes—any way you like. Just let yourselves go and don't worry what other people are doing. Then sit down while Group 2 takes a turn."

Piano music will do, but well amplified gramophone records of orchestras are very much better. Pieces in which marked changes of mood and tempo occur are the most stimulating. There is no need to be obvious in one's choice of material and rhythms. Too obvious rhythms produce more immediate up-takes, but, like too much help and too many suggestions, they limit the imaginative ranging which it is the chief value of this kind of activity to stimulate.

Watching children's physical reaction to music is fascinating, especially because they are often so unexpected. We may not know at all exactly what their imaginations are up to, and quite probably they are vague about it themselves,

but they are obviously up to something, possibly something much more rich and strange than we suspect or than they could put words to. We leave them to grope, and do not ask questions. To ask a child what he is pretending to do may be as unwise as to ask why he likes a poem. Merely encourage them to use their arms as well as the rest of the anatomy—and let them get on with it.

Eventually one strikes a record which the children ask for again and again. Let them have it. If it develops into a group mime, so much the better.

### Occupational Mime

In free musical mime precise definition should not be sought for. Exactly the opposite is true of occupational mime, the object of which is to encourage apt movement based upon precise observation. The idea of it may be introduced a day or two before a recreation period:

"Every day we do all kinds of things without thinking about them. Some of them are so easy to remember that it is easy to go through the movements without the things themselves to help us. That is called mime—movement without objects to help. It is good fun to make up *Puzzle Mimes*. Look, I will do you one. It is so easy that you will spot it at once, but you won't say what it is. That is a rule in the puzzle-mime game: you never say what it is till the



person asks, 'What is it?' Watch." Then turn on an imaginary hot tap, take soap, use it, put it down, rinse under the tap, and find that the water is now running much hotter. Turn off that tap, turn on cold, finish rinsing, and wipe.

"Well, what was it? . . . Of course. I told you it was an easy one. Was I using a basin or washing under the tap? . . . Yes—not the best way of washing! How many taps? . . . Was either tap hot? . . . How could you tell? . . . Did I miss anything? . . . Did I rinse properly? . . . Even in a very easy mime like that there are a number of things to remember, you see.

"Now here is an idea: tomorrow afternoon I will ask some of you to do mimes of things which you yourself do, and the rest of us will watch, and see how good you are, and whether you miss anything out, and so on. So do a little private rehearsal. You will find that some things which are quite easy to do in the ordinary way are not at all easy when you haven't the real things in hand. For instance, try tying an imaginary bow or tie, or doing imaginary knitting—you will be surprised."

Next step: "You can also make very good puzzle mimes by imitating other people doing their jobs. For instance, here is somebody's mother doing something."

Then walk across the room, bring back an imaginary work basket, open it, take a needle and a reel of cotton, draw off two feet, break, moisten the end, try to thread, get in a better light, thread, and say, "What was it?"

"Threading a needle, of course. That is easy to guess. Did I go wrong

anywhere? Did I miss out anything? No? Well, John, you come out and take on. Be Mother using the threaded needle. I will tell you just how." Then whisper to him, "Be Mother sewing on a button." To the class: "Watch him and decide what he is doing. I wonder if he will miss any step. But don't stir till he says 'What was it?'"

"Well, did he miss anything? Did he tie the knot? Did he wind the cotton round to make a shank?"—and so on.

"You will find all sorts of interesting things to imitate if you keep your eyes open. Some of them are not nearly as easy as you would think. For example, have you ever watched a draper's assistant take a flat bale of stuff off a shelf, and unroll some of it, and measure it off, and then cut a length? That makes a good mime, but we shall want to know whether it was a heavy bale, and whether you have noticed just how the unrolling is done. And when you use the scissors we ought to be able to tell whether it is thick stuff or calico or what. Tomorrow afternoon we will have puzzle mimes about other people at work. See what you can do."

It is possible to devise mimes involving facial expression. An instance: "Have you ever noticed a man shaving, and how he pulls his face about to get the right parts tight? He looks very funny, but he doesn't know it. He looks quite serious. That is partly what makes him look so funny. You should remember that if you try that mime: the more serious you are the funnier you will be, but if you seem to be making funny faces on purpose you won't be funny at all." Incidentally that is a fundamental principle of comic acting as distinguished from clowning—

though a great many would-be comedians do not realize it.

### Group Mimes

From solo mime it is a natural step to mimes needing two people. Simple examples, which are nevertheless admirably productive of movement, are throwing an imaginary ball to and fro and playing deck quoits, the latter involving much bending and quick movement from side to side. Speaking of balls: trick tossing up and bouncing between the legs and so on makes a good solo mime, and so does skipping, both solo and triple. Larger group work is also easy to contrive, and with a little ingenuity the results can be worked into dumb charades. The P.T. class is the best place for most work of this kind.

### Dumb Charades

The fact that all children recognize charades as a game adds to their value as a form of dramatic work. The dumb kind are worth cultivating not only because they are good fun in themselves, and conducive to expressive movement, but also because they lead naturally to the spoken kind, which will be mentioned later, and to other forms of dialogue.

Like the occupational mimes, with which their connection should be strongly emphasized, charades need an audience which will not spoil everything by bursting in with the word. They must learn that the play is the thing, and that it is the worst of manners to offer solutions until asked by the Charade Leader. This is especially true of the Story-title Charades, which are mentioned next, for the whole thing can often be guessed from

the first syllable. The interest is not in guessing the title but in seeing what the players make of it.

The commonest fault of children's charades is that they are too brief and perfunctory, but a good dose of occupational mime helps to cure this and to encourage the right kind of elaboration. Another fault is that of choosing a word which is less interesting than one or more of its syllables, so that anticlimax is inevitable. The great thing, of course, is to choose a word which will provide a really good climax, and then to improvise the syllables as adequately as may be. Finally, and not unnaturally, children do not realize the possibilities of charades. They think, for example, that comedy is everything. But as soon as they have been shown that a charade syllable may produce something quite beautiful, and that this may follow or precede something comic; as soon, above all, as they realize that merely guessing the word is what matters least, they are not without ability in developing the charade as a minor form of dramatic art.

It is always advisable to have an Announcer for charades whether dumb or dialogue, not only because announcing means orderly speech practice, but also because it extends the range of possible activities by forestalling quibblers. Thus, for "laundry," syllables "lawn" and "dry": "Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to act a word of two syllables. Here is the first syllable. Its sound is quite correct, but its spelling, I fear, is not."

Then, after Father has mown the lawn, dealing out condign punishment to Tommy who has left pebbles on it—or whatever is acted to represent "lawn": "Ladies and gentlemen, we

hope you enjoyed our first syllable. Our second is in one way just the opposite of our first: its spelling is quite correct, but its sound is wrong." Then will follow some dry scene, possibly to do with a desert and waterless travellers, but not involving drying clothes, because that would anticipate the climax.

Next: "Ladies and gentlemen, you have seen our two syllables. Now comes the word itself. It will be shown in several different ways at once, so that you will have to imagine that you are in several different places at once." That prepares for a good composite occupational mime: on one side a housewife collecting the laundry and listing it with one eye on the clock, and the laundry-man arriving too soon, centre, washing, drying, starching, ironing, and parcelling; on the other side the laundry-man bringing the laundry home, and the housewife unpacking it and discovering too many holes and too few buttons.

Finally: "Ladies and gentlemen, that is the end of our charade. What was the word?"

Announcers also make it possible to skip dull syllables and to use composites. Thus:

*Announcer:* "Ladies and gentlemen, our charade is of two words. Each word contains two syllables, but we shall have only three acts altogether: one for each word and one for the whole thing. Here is our first word of two syllables." (Garden.)

Then: "Here is our second word, also of two syllables—a lively happy scene." (Party.)

Last: "Now comes the whole scene, a most grand affair in a famous place with heaps of famous people there. I think you ought to recognize at least

some of them." (A garden party at Buckingham Palace, with string band on duty, ladies and gentlemen strolling, and the parade of the royal family making a climax.)

Following are a few words suitable for charades. Some are obviously more suitable for spoken treatment, others will do for either. Mixed treatment, part spoken, part dumb, is best of all.

*Chaussur:* (1) show; (2) fur; (3) looking into the bonnet and then driving off.

*Cockneys,* a speech charade: (1) rival cocks crowing and settling their rivalry by combat, one being victorious; (2) knees; (3) a study of Cockney speech, in which there is no need for exaggeration.

*Croquet:* (1) crow; (2) key; (2) the game.

*Faiground:* (1) fare: a bus conductor; (2) ground: a mill scene; (3) a gay composite scene.

*Make-up:* the syllables of this are not interesting, but it is worth doing on account of the whole word, which gives such a good chance for facial mime—a row of players, seen as if through their mirrors, making up for the play.

*Market-place:* (1) mark; (2) ate (et); (3) place, possibly a mimed dispute about positions in a queue; (4) a composite mime with cheap-jacks, houp-la, stalls, etc.

*Milliner:* (1) mill; (2) inner; (3) a double scene, half workroom, half show-room.

*Parade:* (1) pa; (2) raid; (3) gives a good opening for pomp and drill

*Rainbow:* (1) rain; (2) bow; (3) preparing for a picnic.

*Scotland,* another speech charade: (1) Euston Station, with an extreme Scot inquiring the way of nonplussed

English people, who hazard guesses with comic results—a scene with excellent possibilities; (2) an elderly gentleman being assisted ashore from a small boat, with damp results; or the famous scene on Columbus's ship when, with mutiny imminent, the masthead watch sighted the West Indies; (3) a composite scene of Scots activities—reels, bagpipes, tossing the caber, cake-making, etc., preferably with two people passing comments in suitable dialect.

*Station:* (1) stay; (2) "shun!" (Attention!), the sergeant-major drilling new recruits in coming smartly to attention. Plenty of chance for speech solos here!; (3) a composite scene.

*Switchback:* The last scene gives an amusing chance for stationary people miming violent movement.

*Turnstile:* (1) a music-hall turn with band of silent jugglers or acrobats, or a very talkative card manipulator; (2) stifle; (3) assorted people going into the Zoo, possibly culminating with the legendary stout lady who sticks halfway.

*Turntable:* (1) mime of Dick Whittington, with cat in active attendance, and children coming in with the round, softly sung,

*Turn again, Whittington,  
Thou worthy citizen,  
Lord Mayor of London;*

(2) table; (3) engine driver and fireman representing the engine, puffing on to the turntable, turning round, and solemnly puffing off again.

### Story-title Charades

In this type of charade the words of the title are acted, and then a scene from the story or a potted version of the whole thing. "Puss in(n) Boots" is

a good one, and "Beauty and the Beast" is another. Here the Announcer can get over the difficulty of the two dull words:

*Announcer:* "Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to act a story-title charade. The title of our story has four words in it, but we shall act only two of them and throw the others away. I will tell you when they come. Altogether, then, our charade will be in three parts, the two main title-words and then the whole thing. Here is our first word. It is of two syllables." Then comes a scene of a beauty parlour, or of a lady dressing for a ball.

Next: "Next come our two dull words. Each is of one syllable. You will no doubt guess them later, so we will now go straight on to our last title-word, which is of one syllable." And so on.

The Announcer can also throw away the first word of "The Golden Goose," Grimm's story of the woodman who, when he was not well enough to do his work, handed it over to his eldest son. Hans went to the forest, refused the little old man a share of his dinner, and chopped himself. The same happened to the second son, Fritz, so that the work fell to young Dumbler, whose original offer had been scorned. He treated the little old man with more generosity, and was rewarded by finding a goose with golden feathers enshrined in the tree he felled. His astonished admiration makes good mime, and so does his hesitation whether to take his treasure home and his decision not to. The inn scene follows, with plenty of background. Then the innkeeper's eldest daughter secretly tries to pull a feather from the tail, and sticks to it. Her jealous younger sister

es to pull her off, and also sticks. Dumbling asks them to let go, and, when they fail to do so, marches off (und and round the room) with goose for aim and girls hanging on behind. The parson, shocked at their ming forwardness, tries to pull them and joins the train. So does the ton who tries to show his master the or of his ways. The procession exits, and we switch over to the king and been worried over the dismalness of his daughter who does not know how smile. Then Dumbling and his adventures appear, the princess laughs, and end with a wedding.

This story is all the better because it is unfamiliar. A good plan is to communicate it in brief to a section of the class, and to warn the onlookers that they will have to keep their wits about them if they are to make out the story clearly enough to rebuild it afterwards in words—a good exercise in oral composition.

Puzzle potted versions of stories may, of course, be mimed without preliminaries. So may scenes from history. The taller children will enjoy miming such rhymes as "Little Miss Muffet" and "The Three Little Kittens," while considerably older ones are not averse to "Jack Sprit," especially if it opens with a wedding, and if the famous dispute is made to take place at the wedding breakfast, to the dismay of the mily retainers.

In fact, the supply of material which a little ingenuity will make practicable is so extensive that further detail is unnecessary here. It will be a natural step from fairly elaborate dumb-charade tales to more detailed miming of longer stories, or at least of outstanding incidents from them.

### Dramatic Reader Mimes

This branch of work is especially easy to initiate in connection with dramatic readers. In most such books one finds incidents, or even whole short plays, which obviously depend more on action than on words. It is a natural thing, when the class has worked on the words enough to be clear about plot and action sequence, to say, "It seems to me that this play could be done almost as clearly without words as with. Shall we try?" A good example of such a play is "The Spell that Would Not Stop" (*London Dramatic Books*, Second Series, Book III, page 108), which is based upon Dukas' overture "L'Apprenti Sorcier," which was also used by Walt Disney as the basis of one of the incidents in "Fantasia." As soon as the class has done enough work on the text to have the sequence of incidents clearly in mind, suggest that they should dispense with words. Work of this kind is most amusing.

### A Mime Project

"The Sleeping Beauty" is one of the best stories for mime, in its combination of romance and comedy, melodrama and idyll. Incidentally, it provides splendid group acting practice in mass reaction, in varied deportment, and in graduated mass entries and exits. Also, the building of it calls for much discussion and experiment.

First, after the story has been revised, and possibly potted as a written exercise, children make a list of the principal characters: King, Queen, and Nurse, who are all possibly comical, and Princess and Prince; twelve good fairies, one bad one who may disguise as the Old Woman in the tower. The rest of the class will find something to

## V A R I E D   F O R M S   O F   D R A M A T I C   W O R K

do as a very pompous Major-domo, a Footman, a Herald, other court functionaries as decided, two or four men-at-arms, and lords and ladies *ad libitum*.

Next, what scenes do we need and what shall they be? There is much to be said for:

(1) the palace, when the baby returns from christening;

(2) the same during the party on her sixteenth birthday, during which she slips away into

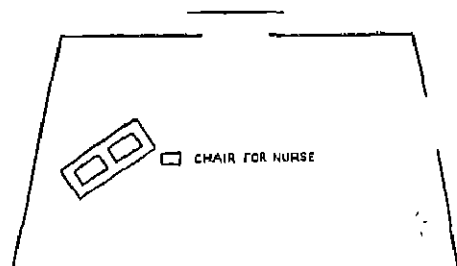
(3) an inset scene in which she meets the Old Woman, and runs weeping to

(4) which is Scene 2 continued. The Princess falls asleep, and so do all the rest in characteristic ways;

(5) The Prince comes, the Princess awakes, and so do the rest in due course.

Just how we arrange the end will be matter for discussion. So will most of the rest of the more detailed scenario. For example, right at the beginning, where shall our main entry be: centre back or side? Suppose we had both, and made use of the centre back in our first big scene, would it be better in our second big scene to repeat the effect or to switch over to the side for chief use? Obviously, for variety's sake, switch. Next, the King and Queen will need a throne. Where shall it be?

Eventually we decide upon this:



POSITION OF STAGE PROPERTIES

And then how shall we open? Shall we begin with all present, or have a built-up entry? If so, shall we begin it at once, or build up a suspense first? What could it be? Children will have few suggestions themselves, but they will see the possibilities of this: two very stiff men-at-arms are on duty at curtain rise, one on each side of the back entry; enter two excitable maids bursting to convey to the men-at-arms that the christening party is approaching. They imitate the importance of the Nurse carrying the baby, etc., and have just indicated that they must fly, when the Major-domo or the Footman appears and they are cast into outer darkness. He disappears, and the soldiers also exit with pomp.

Now, in what order shall the people come on? Baby first, or lords and ladies, or what? The children, being most interested in the baby, will want to give it first place, but they will quickly appreciate the build-up value of keeping the best till last. Logical order is:

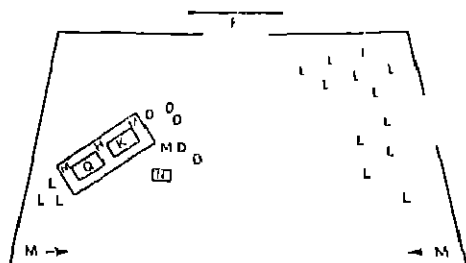
- (1) men-at-arms returning,
- (2) lords and ladies,
- (3) officials,
- (4) King and Queen,
- (5) Nurse carrying baby,
- (6) a very small, pompous Page added for fun.

Here it is time for discussion to give way to experiment. Dividing the class into two, we ask one half to do the entry, the rest criticizing. Almost certainly the men-at-arms will return to their original post by the door, and the officials merge themselves into a dull curve with lords and ladies, masking the back entry and the unhappy soldiers.

Discuss this, pointing out the faults,

and that officials would never line up with mere lords and ladies. Then let the other half try, and eventually lead to the decision that as soon as the lords and ladies are in we will march the men-at-arms down to centre front, and then one to each side, where they will stand facing centre, right at the sides. (This is a simple trick but often useful. It furnishes our front corners and gives a kind of frame to our picture. Also it adds effect of depth to the stage.) If we decide that we would like to increase the height of the throne group, we can have two more men-at-arms. Let the original two mount a table behind the throne, then let two more accompany Nurse on and take over the front-corner positions.

Perhaps our first main group may be something like this:



K, Q=King and Queen; N=Nurse; M.D =Major-domo; F=Footman; H=Herald, M, M=Men-at-arms; O, O=Officials, L, L=Lords and Ladies.

Possible later action is here briefly summarized, but in practice it will be elicited and tried out step by step.

*Continuing Scene 1.*—A gushing lady mimes may they look at the darling? The King graciously assents. The Major-domo signs the Footman to bring a cradle, which he does with great pomp, placing it centie. The baby is laid in it (this is optional: the Nuisse may stand centie instead), King, Queen, and Nuisse group about it, and

the court parades round—a good opening for movement and effusive mine.

Just as this is finishing, music is heard off stage left: a surprised static group. Major-domo goes out to inspect, returning at once in a great state to announce that the Fairies are there. The Fairies! Everyone hurries to places, not necessarily just the same as at first, and Nurse removes the cradle to a convenient position. The Queen gives instructions about the golden plates to the Major-domo, who passes them on to the Footman as soon as he has graciously ushered in the Fairies, who run on as gracefully as may be through the side entry, and curtsy to the cradle, possibly dancing as well.

The Footman arrives with the golden plates, all twelve of them. The delighted Fairies muse the christening gifts they are presenting. The twelfth and smallest is about to do so when there is a crash (in stage performance a change of lighting would be apt), and the Wicked Fairy appears—a good exercise is reaction for everyone. Her anger increases at the sight of the golden plates, and is not mollified by the King's excuses.

She points threateningly at the cradle—crowd dismay; mines the spinning-wheel curse—increased dismay; and the result—horror! Then she exits, leaving the Queen and Nurse in a state of collapse in the arms of the King and the Major-domo respectively. Tension is eased by the twelfth Fairy, who has been in conclave with the other eleven since the Wicked Fairy's intrusion. The King cheers up to the extent of ordering the destruction of all spinning-wheels, and the scene may end with the Herald's proclamation.

*Scene 2*, the Princess's birthday party,

should be as full of movement as the first was static. Possibly it may begin with a dance, which is interrupted by the Nuisé, rapturous at how lovely the Princess looks. But they will see, for she is coming, now—and she does, to take the smaller throne which has been set between her parents'.

Exactly why the Princess left the party and went prying into remote towers is not clear, and something should be done about it. One way is to have the Footman announce refreshments, so producing a fine group exit. Directly the stage is clear a small puckish creature arrives, queer but charming, who dances naughtily and then blows imaginary notes on a small pipe. The Princess arrives, and the newcomer mimes a whispered message, obviously signifying that it will be fun to give everyone a surprise. After some hesitation the Princess falls in with the jest and they run off together.

*Scene 3.*—Here, in stage performance, is one of those frequent occasions when it is essential not to interrupt the main flow by an interval. A simple device will serve: the curtains close, and the Wicked Fairy, disguised as the Old Woman, takes her position at the spinning-wheel close behind the curtains at centre. Two people then sweep them apart and pull them together behind her, making a small alcove, the Princess and her guide entering through the crack or from the hall floor. In the classroom, of course, any corner will serve. This scene quickly over, and the anguished Princess having made her exit, the curtains are simply swept in front of the triumphant Wicked Fairy, she and her spinning-wheel go off. Then without delay the curtains sweep back, showing the stage empty.

*Scene 4.*—Someone comes to see what the Princess is doing, and, not finding her, gives the alarm. Immediately all is bustle—another type of entry this time—with the Queen and Nuisé very properly agitated and the King frantic. Someone announces that the Princess is coming, and everything is static again. At her entry a family group forms, all concern. The Princess yawns—apparently an unheard-of thing for a Princess to do—and falls asleep, supported by Nuisé. A couch is brought and suitably placed, and the Princess is laid upon it. This graceful scene at once changes to comedy, everyone else being attacked by sleepiness in varied and characteristic ways, by no means all serious, and eventually sinking down in slumber.

Unless something is to be done about dresses, or something elaborate in the cobweb line is to be introduced, there is no need in stage presentation to close the curtains here—an advantage. A black-out, or better still a dim-down with some queer lighting effects to follow, and suitably slumbrous music played the while, is much better. Before it is finished, the Prince arrives, moves about in the half-light, sees the Princess and kisses her. There is a moment of entire stillness, then—the Princess moves, the light leaps to bright normal, and a record of bird-song sets the atmosphere. The Prince romantically leads the Princess off, leaving the stage free for the best comedy yet—the court awakening, not all together but stage by stage, the King and Queen being kept till last. They are apparently late morning sleepers.

There can be some miming of dust and cobwebs on clothes, though these are entirely invisible, and some mimed



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sneezing. Then attention veers to the couch, at which, most conveniently, no one has even glanced till now. (If a curtained couch can be arranged, this part can be delightful, the royal parents planning to give the dear sleepyhead a

surprise awakening) Discovery, of course, causes dismay, but this is quickly dispelled by the re-entry of the Prince and Princess, which leads to the happy ending, possibly signified by a folk- or other dance.

## CHAPTER SIX

# NARRATIVE PLAYS FROM LITERATURE

THE logical development is to go straight on from silent work to full play making, in which, starting from nothing, we borrow our plot or build one by means of discussion, put it into action shape, clothe it with dialogue improvised as we act, polish and prune it by repetition, and finally, when it is ready for performance, *and not before*, commit the whole thing to paper if we wish to.

But as such a project may seem formidable to inexperience, we may adopt the less adventurous approach of collaborating with children in recasting non-dramatic material in dramatic form. This will not produce the best results, for children seem to need the stimulus of striking out on their own to bring out their real capacity; but still, work of this type has its points, not the least of which is that it provides the teacher with opportunities to learn.

Whatever story-book the class happens to be reading, there are sure to be patches of close dialogue, which, by omitting the he-saids and she-saids, can be spoken right away. Comment on this, and have such a passage acted. Give it every chance. Produce it. Get the actors to speak it really well, and then say to the class, "What do you think of it? Or at any rate what would you think of it in a play? Does it sound

like real life? Will it do just as it stands?"

In nine cases out of ten, however short the passage and however young the class, we find ourselves plunged into a composition exercise of the most practical kind, involving quite subtle comparisons between the spoken and the written word. This is something we should be at a loss to touch in the ordinary way, yet here are quite young children touching it for themselves, and purposefully—using their ears, formulating opinions and expressing them. Certainly the expressions are homely:

"It seems a bit long," they say, or "There's too much of it."

"It sounds a bit stiff," or "It sounds sticky," or "That isn't how people talk."

And these statements are usually true of literary dialogue lifted straight into action, however good it may be; for the simple reason that, in order to get his effect without help of action and audible inflections, the writer is compelled to use more words than the dramatist needs. The reason is obvious enough, yet the fact is remarkable for young children to discover for themselves. But discover it they do: that play dialogue can be, indeed must be, shorter than book dialogue if it is to sound convincing, and that, given help of voice, clarity can be secured with

less elaborate grammatical machinery, especially of relative pronouns, than is needed in writing.

We continue the experiment by asking the class to rewrite the fragment as they think it should be in a play, and then have a few examples read out as a means of carrying out a good piece of ear training—the kind of thing upon which live composition depends, yet which remains in the ordinary way virtually untaught.

In dealing with such passages as these we often find that a small piece of dialogue is missed out, or is put into indirect speech. Let the children supply it in writing, and then listen to it and compare notes.

Sometimes—and this is especially valuable—the author starts up a good scene and then suddenly stops just before the end, which the class supplies.

Leaping ahead, we may point out two famous examples from classics: the Cratchits' Christmas dinner scene from *A Christmas Carol*, and the aunts scene from *The Mill on the Floss*, in which Maggie Tulliver crops her hair. In the first, surprisingly enough, the vivacious twins who fetch the goose are given nothing to say. They are not even given Christian names—two omissions which must obviously be rectified. Otherwise the scene is complete. Indeed it is too complete. As always, Dickens's dialogue is so profuse that it needs cutting if it is not to sound excessively wordy in action. George Eliot, on the other hand, is a model of economy. Her dialogue is usable almost without cut. But she stops just at the climax and leaves us to finish the scene—a very pleasing thing to do. As in all work of this kind, our aim must be to produce

what we imagine the authors would have supplied had they been writing for the stage.

### **Dramatic Reader Rewrites**

Excellent practice of this kind can be devised in connection with dramatic readers. Perhaps we come across something—it may be a string of short speeches or even a single speech—which the class recognizes as being especially effective. When they have read it once or twice—enough to get the run of it but not commit it to memory—we say, "That is a good piece. Let's close books and write it down, and see if our versions sound as well as what the author wrote." After-comparisons will show that it is not enough to use the right words and sentences: to be effective they must be in the right order. Thus a sentence which sounds admirable following the right cue loses half its effect if the cue sentence is put too early for the "tie on" to be felt. (This looks abstruse on paper, but it leaps to the ear in practice.)

After experiments on a small scale, it will be worth while to tackle a version of a whole scene or even a complete short play: pot the story, plot out the action into steps or sections, supply the dialogue, and then subject results to the test of action.

Another easy road towards wider development is to take a story, briefly narrate the unactable passages, and act the rest. Combined narrative and acting of this kind is frequently heard on the air, and although home-made specimens are suitable for public performance only if briskly and ingeniously taken along, they are very useful indeed in class, since they render usable a mass of material which would

hardly be practicable in purely dramatic form. Grimm—a mine of raw material, and very much better than Hans Andersen for our purpose—supplies many stories which can be handled in this way, with “King Thrushbeard” as an outstanding example.

Suitable whole books may be similarly used. *Alice in Wonderland* is an excellent example. Not all children like it in book form, but they revel in its dramatic possibilities. What follows will be enough to suggest the technique, which is applicable to many stories, either short or long. Two narrators are used, for the sake of variety and lightening the individual burden. Whether they memorize their stuff or read most of it from script is immaterial, provided that the reading is vital and prompt.

## ALICE IN WONDERLAND

### INTRODUCTION

#### HOW IT BEGAN

1ST NARRATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to act *Alice in Wonderland* for you—or at least parts of it. To play the whole thing would take too long: besides, there are parts we could hardly manage. But as we do not want our efforts to fall to pieces, we have decided to tell you the story very briefly, and then, when we come to an actable piece, the players will take charge.

Two of us are going to do the telling: I am one, and here is the other. (*Enter 2ND NARRATOR.*) We shall sit one on each side and take turns, to make a change. (*They take their places.*)

2ND NARRATOR: Shall we start?

1ST: All right. (*They sit one on each*

*side.*) You take first turn and tell how it began.

2ND: But here they are. If you look and listen you will see what happened.

SISTER: Alice, how you do keep yawning! Anyone would think you were half asleep.

ALICE: I do feel rather drowsy. Let's sit down on this bank in the shade for a little while, shall we?

SISTER: Very well, and I will read my book. (*She begins to do so. After a moment of fidgeting ALICE looks over her shoulder.*)

ALICE: Dear, dear! What a dull-looking book! No pictures and no conversations. What is the use of a book without pictures or conversation?

SISTER: Alice, I can't possibly read if you keep talking.

ALICE: But what else is there to do?

SISTER: Wouldn't you like to make a daisy chain?

ALICE: Yes, I would, but I can't decide whether it's worth the trouble of picking the daisies.

SISTER: Then you had better go to sleep. You look half asleep already.

ALICE: No, I'm not. Of course I'm not.

1ST NARRATOR: But I think she must have been, really, because all of a sudden her sister seemed to have gone. (*Exit SISTER.*)

2ND: Besides, it must have been a dream, or the queer things would not have happened that did happen. Suddenly Alice rubbed her eyes,

1ST: or dreamed she did,

2ND: and looked along the field,

1ST: and then she was most surprised.

### THE WHITE RABBIT

ALICE: Why, what is this coming? It looks like a white rabbit—and it is a

white rabbit too: a white rabbit with pink eyes. But who ever heard of a white rabbit with coat and waistcoat and a very high collar, and an umbrella under his left arm? Still, a white rabbit it is, and in a great hurry. What is that he is saying to himself?

WHITE RABBIT (*entering*): Oh dear! I shall be too late. (*He takes out a watch and looks at it.*) It can't be that time. It must have stopped. (*He puts it to his ear.*) No. It's going. Oh dear! Oh dear! (*Exit on the other side.*)

ALICE: Well! A white rabbit with a gold watch! Where is he going? (*Exit after him.*)

1ST: Into a rabbit hole by the look of it. (*They run up stage and look after ALICE.*)

2ND: And what's more, Alice is going in after him.

1ST: Yes! She's in.

BOTH: Oh!

ALICE (*off stage*): Oh! Oh, I'm falling! I'm falling down a well!

(*The narrators take their places again.*)

2ND: It was a very odd well, like a schoolroom and kitchen mixed.

1ST: It was very deep, too, but Alice didn't hurt herself at all.

2ND: She fell on a heap of dry leaves, and when she picked herself up she found she was at the beginning of a kind of tunnel.

BOTH: And there was the White Rabbit hurrying along it just as before.

1ST: Here he comes.

WHITE RABBIT (*as he hurries across*): Oh, my ears and whiskers, how late it's getting! (*Exit.*)

(*ALICE hurries across after him and looks off.*)

ALICE: Why, where has he gone?

Vanished! Well, it is no use following a vanished rabbit, I suppose. What kind of place is this? A long low hall with tiny doors all round. Where does this one lead to? (*She tries an imaginary door.*) Locked. (*She tries another.*) So is this. (*She tries others.*) They are all locked. How shall I ever get out again? . . . What is that hidden in the corner? (*She runs to a front corner.*) A little three-legged table made of solid glass. What is this on it? A tiny golden key. Perhaps it fits one of the doors. (*She tries them.*) No, it doesn't . . . Yes, it fits this one. (*She kneels down and peers through.*) Oh, what a lovely garden! What bright flowers—and how cool the fountains look! Oh, how I wish—but what is the use of wishing? Even if my head would go through, it would be of very little use without my shoulders. (*Getting up.*) I had better lock it again. Oh, how I wish I could shut up like a telescope! I think I could if I only knew how to begin. . . . Why, what is that on the glass table? (*She gets a little bottle with a label tied on.*) I'm sure that wasn't there before. What is this on the label?—"Drink me." Ah, but I shall have to see if it's labelled "Poison" first. . . . No, it isn't. I wonder if it smells nice. . . . If it tastes as nice as it smells. . . . Oh yes! A sort of mixed flavour of cherry tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffee, and hot buttered toast. Did I leave a little drop? Yes. . . . What a curious feeling! I must be shutting up like a telescope.

\* When something is wanted which cannot be had, such as a glass table, it is usually satisfactory to put it just out of the audience's sight, and describe it. In the same way it is often effective to have unplayable things, such as military processions, happen off stage where they are "seen" by on-stage players and conveyed to the audience. This is the kind of simple expedient which practically no children ever see for themselves.

1ST: She is, too! Look.

2ND: So she is! She's only about two foot three now.

ALICE: I hope I don't shrink much further. It might end in my going out altogether, like a candle. No. I think I'm stopping. I ought to be just right for that door now. Let me see. . . . Yes, just right. All I need is the key off the table. (*She runs to the hidden table and gazes up.*) Oh! Oh, but how can I get it, right up there? Oh, how silly of me! I ought to have kept it. I wonder if I could climb up the leg. No, much too slippery. Really, how disappointing—to be able to *see* the key and not—oh, how *very* disappointing.

1ST: Oh, the poor little thing! She's crying.

2ND: But that's no use, you know.

ALICE: No use at all. Come, there's no sense in crying like that. . . . Why, what's that lying under the table? I didn't see that before. . . . A tiny glass box. . . .

And so it goes on. Having overcome the height difficulty by the simple device of narrative comment and having nothing on the stage for comparison, we ought to be able to do anything. There is nothing in the dialogue so far which children could not manage for themselves, sometimes borrowing direct, sometimes turning non-dialogue into dialogue. They would hardly think of Alice's occasional broken sentences for themselves, but, hearing that complete ones sometimes sound too long in action, they would soon tumble to it as a means of avoiding wordiness. The next incident, The Pool of Tears, gives amusing opportunity for swimming mime and a stage full of minor

characters in quaint head-dresses. The Caucus Race follows. Everything is simple until we reach Chapter IV, "The Rabbit Sends in a Little Bill." As most children like this best of all, we must do something about it. Plain narrative would be easy, but tame compared with action. Let us see (after discussion) what we can do with mostly imagined action, eked out by narrative comment.

The Caucus Race scene concludes with all the creatures making excuses to leave—which the players must invent. Alice says, "I wish I hadn't mentioned Dinah. Nobody seems to like her down here, and I'm sure she's the best cat in the world. Never mind: perhaps they will come back"—and we are ready for the next scene. Since we could not present the setting even with a stage and built-up house, we must substitute words on these lines:

#### THE RABBIT SENDS IN A LITTLE BILL

ALICE (*looking off at one side*): Why, what's that under the trees there? It can't be—and yet it is: a little house. What a dear little place! Windows and a chimney-pot and everything. White curtains, and roses and honeysuckle growing up the walls. A green front door with a brass plate. What does it say? It looks like "W. Rabbit," but I can't really see from here. I wonder if I dare go and look! Sh! (*She looks off the other way.*) Footsteps. I wonder who it can be. The White Rabbit!—but how big he has grown! No, it's myself, of course: I am smaller. Perhaps I had better keep in the background. . . . What's the matter? He looks in a great state.

RABBIT (*entering*): The Duchess! The Duchess! Oh, my dear paws! Oh,

my fur and whiskers! She'll have me executed as sure as ferrets are ferrets. Where *can* I have dropped that fan and gloves?

(*He begins to hunt about, and ALICE hunts too. After a moment he sees her.*)

RABBIT: Why, Mary Ann! What are you doing out here?

ALICE: He takes me for his housemaid.

RABBIT: Run home this moment and fetch me a pair of gloves and a fan. Quick, now!

ALICE: Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

RABBIT: Go on. Go in. What are you waiting for? Go on.

ALICE (*off*): Which room will they be in, sir?

RABBIT: Why, my bedroom, of course.

ALICE (*off*): Yes, sir.

RABBIT: Really, these girls! I don't know what they are coming to.

ALICE (*off*): Is this the room, sir?

RABBIT: Yes, of course it is, silly. As if she didn't know my bedroom—hanging out of the window! (*He begins to walk up and down.*) Oh, do hurry, girl. What is she doing? What *is* she doing? (*He keeps on walking.*)

1ST NARRATOR to 2ND NARRATOR: She certainly does seem to be taking her time.

2ND. I hope she hasn't found another of those boxes or bottles or something.

1ST: I believe she has. I can't exactly see, but that looks like a hand at the window. Come and look. . . . Doesn't that look like a hand to you?

2ND: Yes, it does, and what a size!

RABBIT: Has the girl gone to sleep? I might have known. I had better go and get them myself. (*Exit.*)

1ST: He has gone in. Now the fun

will begin, if Alice really has grown huge.

2ND: How she is managing in that little room I can't imagine. She must simply cram it.

1ST: Sh!

RABBIT (*shouting off*): Let me in. Let me in, will you? How dare you lock my bedroom door?

ALICE (*off*): I haven't locked your bedroom door. It's *me*.

RABBIT (*off*): What do you mean: "It's me"? Let me in.

ALICE (*off*): I can't.

RABBIT: Very well. Then I shall go round and get in at the window.

ALICE: *That* you won't!

(*THE NARRATORS run up stage to see better.*)

1ST: Here he comes, out of the front door again.

2ND: He's getting the ladder.

1ST: He has put it up against the wall.

2ND: Look—What's that coming out of the window?

1ST: A hand! And what a hand!

2ND: Why doesn't he look up?

1ST: Now then!—snatch!

(*Shouts. Drop crash box full of broken glass, tins, etc. Suitable exclamations and fainter clatters.*)

2ND: He's fallen into the cucumber frame. He does look in a state.

1ST: Look out. He's coming.

(*They hurry back to the far front corners as the RABBIT comes on in a towering rage. He marches up and down, grumbling and brushing himself down. Presently he shouts:*)

RABBIT: Pat! Pat! Where are you?

PAT (*off*): Sure, then, I'm here. Digging for apples, yer honour.

RABBIT: Digging for apples, indeed! Come here at once.

PAT (*entering with spade*): Yes, yer honour.

RABBIT: Pat, come here.

PAT: Yes, yer honour.

RABBIT: Look at my house.

PAT: Yes, yer honour.

RABBIT: Look at the upstairs window—the one on the left.

PAT: Yes, yer honour.

RABBIT: Now tell me, Pat: what's that in the window?

PAT: Sure, it's an arrum, yer honour.

RABBIT: An arm, you goose! Who ever saw an arm that size? Why, it fills the whole window.

PAT: Sure it does, yer honour, but it's an arrum for all that.

RABBIT: Well, it's no business there. Go and take it away.

PAT: Sure, I don't like it, yer honour, at all at all.

RABBIT: Do as I tell you, you coward.  
(*Exit PAT.*)

RABBIT: Don't stand there, now. Get hold of a finger and pull.

PAT (*off*): Which one, yer honour?

RABBIT: Which one! What does it matter which one? Any one.

PAT (*off*): Oh dear, oh dear! I don't like it at all at all, but still . . .

RABBIT: That's it. That's it! Hold on. Now pull.

PAT (*off*): I am pulling, yer honour.

(*The RABBIT gets excited to the point of jumping up and down, and there is plenty of noise both on and off: RABBIT shouting encouragement, PAT giving dismayed bellows. RABBIT suddenly becomes dismayed too.*)

RABBIT: Mind my cucumber frames. Pat! Get over the other way. I don't want to lose another one.

(*Noise and excitement again.*)

RABBIT: Keep over. Keep over. Keep—

(*Crash.*)

RABBIT (*covering his ears and turning away*): Oh! My cucumber frames! (*Enter on the far side from the house, quietly, a number of creatures from the Pool of Tears scene. Among them is BILL, a very shy lizard.*)

1ST CREATURE: What's the matter?

2ND: What's happened?

RABBIT (*turning as PAT totters on, sadly dishevelled*): That's what has happened.

3RD: What's he been trying to do?

RABBIT: He's been trying to get Mary Ann out of my house.

4TH: Well, that's easy enough, surely.

PAT (*dismally*): Is it!

4TH: You just march in through the door—

RABBIT: No use. I tried that.

5TH: Or climb in through the window.

RABBIT: No use, I tried *that*.

6TH: Then the only thing is to go down the chimney.

7TH (*a fat one*): Don't be silly. Can you see me going down a chimney?

6TH: No, not you, but—

7TH: Who could, then?

ALL (*as if by one inspiration*): Bill could.

8TH: Of course he could. Bill's thin.

ALL: Come on, Bill.

9TH: You could go down a chimney for the gentleman, couldn't you, Bill?

BILL: Aye, maybe. But I'd have to get up to him first.

10TH: That would be easy enough with a ladder, Bill.

BILL: Aye, maybe. But I haven't got a ladder.

RABBIT: Oh, that's all right, Bill. I have a ladder.



# NARRATIVE PLAYS FROM LITERATURE

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BILL: Aye, maybe. But will it be long enough?

1ST: Well, if it isn't, we've got the little one on the truck. We could lash them together.

RABBIT: Splendid! The very idea. Get it, will you?

*(They wheel on a little truck with a short ladder, or, if truck is not available, omit the phrase about it and simply carry on ladder and rope.)*

2ND: Here we are, sir.

RABBIT: The very thing.

3RD: Plenty of rope, too.

RABBIT: It couldn't be better. Off you go, now. *(They hurry off.)* Now, we shall see.

PAT *(who has been sitting in a corner mopping his head)*: Yes, we shall, yer honour!

RABBIT: Pat, what a misery you are!

PAT: Yes, yer honour.

1ST *(off)*: Where's the other ladder?

RABBIT: There you are, by the cucumber frames.

1ST *(off)*: So it is.

2ND *(off)*: Put it up by the chimney-stack.

ALL *(off)*: Up she goes.

RABBIT: No. Lash them together first.

3RD *(off)*: Where's that rope gone to?

4TH *(off)*: Here you are.

5TH *(off)*: Give it to me.

6TH *(off)*: Pull it tight.

7TH *(off)*: See it's a good knot

8TH *(off)*: That's all right. Ready?

ALL *(off)*: Up she goes.

8TH *(off)*: There you are, Bill. There's your ladder.

BILL *(off)*: Aye, maybe. But it doesn't reach the chimney-pot.

9TH *(off)*: Never mind, Bill. You'll have to scramble up the slates. Up you go. Ready?

BILL *(off)*: Aye, maybe.

10TH *(off)*: Will the roof bear?

1ST *(off)*: That's it, Bill. Hang on to the guttering.

2ND *(off)*: Swing a leg over. That's the boy.

3RD *(off)*: Up you go now, Bill.

RABBIT: Mind that loose slate! Oh dear!

ALL *(off)*: Heads!

*(Crash.)*

RABBIT: Oh, my cucumber frames!

BILL *(off)*: Now who did that?

ALL *(off)*: Bill!

5TH *(off)*: Never mind, Bill. Up the chimney-stack, lad.

6TH *(off)*: That's it, Bill. Down you go, boy: down the chimney now.

BILL *(off)*: Aye, maybe, but which way? Head first or tail first?

SOME *(off)*: Head first.

OTHERS *(off)*: Tail first.

RABBIT: Tail first.

ALL *(off)*: Tail first.

*(About half of the creatures come backing on to the stage.)*

RABBIT: He's good, that lizard.

1ST: Ay, he's nimble, is Bill. Doesn't waste time.

2ND: No. He's got his tail tucked in now.

3RD: Tail's down.

4TH: Now his back legs.

5TH: Back legs are down.

1ST: He's up to his armpits.

RABBIT *(very excited)*: He's up to his—

ALL: Hey!

2ND: What are you jumping up and down for, Bill?

BILL *(off)*: Somebody's kicking me.

ALL: Don't be so silly, Bill!

3RD: Of course nobody's kicking you, Bill.

5TH: Who could be kicking you?

## V A R I E D F O R M S O F D R A M A T I C W O R K

BILL (off): I don't know, but somebody is.

RABBIT: Where?

BILL (off): Underneath. Hey! Hey! Stop it there, will you? You'll be kicking me into the garden next. Hey!

RABBIT: What's happening now? What's—

1ST: It's all right.

2ND: He's going down all right. Good old Bill!

3RD: There goes his neck.

4TH: There go his eyes.

5TH: There go his—

ALL (on and off, fortissimo): Hey! There—goes—Bill!

(Everyone is rushing about.)

RABBIT: Catch him! Catch him there, you by the hedge. Oh—my— (covering his eyes).

(Crash.)

ALL (on stage, covering their faces): Poor—old—Bill!

1ST: He must have broken his neck.

2ND: No. Look.

3RD: They're bringing him here.

(Enter the other creatures, carrying Bill.)

RABBIT: Poor fellow! Poor fellow! Lay him down here. Gently, gently. That's right. Give him air. There, Bill, you'll soon be all right now.

BILL (very faintly): Aye, maybe.

RABBIT: Hold up his head, somebody.

1ST: Give him brandy. . .

RABBIT: Don't choke him.

2ND: There. How was it, old fellow?

3RD: What happened to you?

RABBIT: Tell us all about it.

BILL: Well, I hardly know.

1ST: Have some more brandy, Bill.

BILL: No more, thank ye. I'm better now, but I'm a deal too flustered to tell you. All I know is, something comes at

me like a Jack-in-the-box, and up I goes like a sky rocket.

ALL: So you did, old fellow! So you did!

RABBIT: We must burn the house down.

ALL: Burn the house down! Burn the house down!

(They rush away, leaving PAT and BILL to help one another off as best they can.)

1ST NARRATOR: But they didn't burn the house down, after all.

2ND: Instead they pelted Alice with pebbles through the window, and oddly enough the pebbles turned into little cakes.

1ST: Alice ate one, and it soon made her quite small, so that she could slip out of the house, and she did.

2ND: The Rabbit and the rest made a rush at her, but she gave them the slip and ran and ran until she came to a thick forest.

1ST: That was rather dangerous, because she met a gigantic puppy—

2ND: it was only life-size really, but it was gigantic to her—

1ST: and the trouble was that it wanted to play.

2ND: A playful puppy is great fun, but when you are only about three inches high it is another thing, especially when it chases you round and round a spiky thistle.

1ST: So Alice was very glad when she was able to slip away into a meadow.

2ND: And that was how she came across the mushroom.

1ST: By standing on tiptoe she could just see the top of it,

2ND: and that was how she saw the person on top of it.

1ST: He was a Caterpillar, and the

odd thing about him was that he was smoking a hookah.

2ND: He seemed a very sleepy caterpillar, but after a time he did say something.

CATERPILLAR: *Who are you?*

So the performance goes on. The scene just completed offers more difficulties than any other in the book, but after all, when subjected to what is, once grasped, a very simple technique, they do not amount to much. Ingenuity is needed, but next to no invention except for the part where the crowd arrives—nothing which could not be managed by discussion, experiment, and collaboration. And yet the result may be a piece of work which will keep the class in a happy and constructive mood for weeks together, resolving before long into something of which the class are as collectively and individually proud as if it were pure invention, something of which they will certainly want to put the fairest possible copy on record, neatly bound and probably illustrated as well.

The great thing in a project of this kind is to choose the right book. *Alice* is perfect. It has so many amusing situations and so much immediately usable dialogue. *Through the Looking-Glass* suggests itself on first thought as being equally good, but in fact it is not, since the story does not crystallize in the same way into handy and self-contained situations. That will be found not infrequently: a book which is essentially dramatic does not lend itself to easy dramatization. *The Children of the New Forest* is an example. The drama is in the general telling rather than in the separate incidents.

But still, even leaving aside the

numerous books of this kind, we can find more than enough whole books to meet our requirements for every age. Still more frequent are the short stories which can be used for narrative acting. Those which can be turned into self-contained plays without help of narration are naturally less easy to come by. But still they are frequent enough.

### Treating Short Stories

This narrative method can very often be used successfully to make possible a stage version of short stories which otherwise would not lend themselves handily to dramatic form. It is a good thing, if possible, to avoid outside narrators, and to have the job done by people who are involved in the action.

Thus a very charming stage version can be made of the well-known Russian story of "Baboushka,"\* the traditional Russian equivalent to Santa Claus. The scene is an ordinary living-room decorated for Christmas, with the children playing with shabby toys, and the mother working. As a means of putting off going to bed, the children ask their mother to tell them the story of Baboushka once again. She gathers them to one side of the stage, and they sit round her while she begins. Baboushka herself comes quietly in and sits by the fireside, and when it is time for her to speak she does so, Mother falling silent and merely pretending to tell the story, the children watching her as before. The narrative drama proceeds in this way, sometimes with the Mother speaking, sometimes with a scene being acted on the rest of the stage while she mimes.

\* A simple version appears in *Play Your Parts* (The London Dramatic Books, Second Series, Book 3), based upon Elizabeth Clark's telling of the story.

A very handsome production of this story could be made by having the story action pitched on an upper stage with a picture-frame setting and curtains, but this would naturally be somewhat elaborate to do.

### Dramatizing Poems

A whole range of poetry and narrative verse lends itself very easily to dramatization, some with the help of narrative, some without. For younger players there is much suitable material in *The London Book of Nursery Rhymes* (edited by J. Murray McBain, University of London Press).

Longfellow's "Song of Hiawatha" is full of dramatic material for older Juniors, but unless means can be devised to avoid the miserable sing-song into which it usually degenerates, it is better left alone.

Ballad poems are also excellent material. There are simple things like "Barley Bridge," and others which need slight adaptation. The easiest of these is the well-known "King John and the Abbot of Canterbury," which may be acted as a three-act play just as it stands if fewer than a dozen narrative lines are recast as dialogue. Such recast-

ing is quite easy, and is much preferable to having stray narrative lines and he-saids and she-saids spoken by the narrators set one on each side of the stage. They are indispensable for speaking whole narrative verses and sequences of verses, but to have them chipping in with little insignificant pieces sounds ridiculous.

Other possibilities are "The Ballad of Earl Haldon's Daughter," "Sir Patrick Spens," "Rosabelle," "Lochinvar," and "John Gilpin," while a whole bunch of practical ballad material will be found in various collections, notably *Ballads and Ballad Poems* (edited by John Hampden: "Teaching of English" Series, Nelson).

In all work of this kind it is of the greatest importance to secure as nearly unbroken continuity as possible. Elaborate furniture and so on is quite unnecessary. The story is the thing, and it is much better to have a stage hand boldly march on with a throne, or whatever may be wanted for the next scene, than to close the curtains. In fact, in dramatic work of every kind, curtains should be closed only when absolutely unavoidable, for there is nothing like intervals, however short, for losing an audience.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# DRAMATIZING A FABLE

**M**ODERN short stories are the easiest to handle, since they generally provide a hard core of dialogue. That is why, as soon as possible, we shall tend to abandon them for stories of the purely narrative kind, since it is good for the children to invent the words even if they do not yet originate the plot.

Whatever the story, we follow a regular routine of preparation:

(1) Discuss its dramatic possibilities, and the characters needed.

(2) Discuss plot and sequence of incidents, but not in any tightly exact way, since we do not want to prevent unexpected developments which often suggest themselves in the heat of action.

(3) Decide fairly exactly what is to happen at the beginning, in order to get the actors going.

(4) Choose provisional opening actors, group them, and ask them to start talking. They do so, helped out if necessary by class suggestions.

### The Question of Writing

Item 4 looks sadly vague on paper, but we will not stop to discuss that at the moment. With various other odd points it can wait until the end of the chapter, while we experiment with practical work. But one point is so important that it must be mentioned at once and laid down as a fixed rule:

*Do not allow children to write down one word of the dialogue until permis-*

*sion is given—and never give that permission until late in the proceedings.*

Just when that will be, and how the writing will be carried out, we can also discuss later. All that matters now is the rule. The general tendency is to allow, even encourage, premature writing. It is a mistake, for once dialogue has been written down, the scene in question develops no more. Work of this kind is, for better or worse, basically oral. To forget that is to send it along the regular Composition path, which usually leads to dull places. Besides, it is better for children to trust to adaptability, observation, resource, and initiative than to depend upon memory with bits of paper for crutches. That they ask for crutches at first matters not at all. Refuse them. Be adamant. Freedom is always intimidating at first. But it is a plant that grows.

Ordinary children find dialogue spinning easy enough once they are pushed off into it. Indeed, the real difficulty is to stop them making too much. The only ones who experience real hardship are those who have had regular stage training. They are so used to depending upon a script that they are disconcerted when forced to think for themselves—a fact which is too significant to need comment.

Fables, which are usually brief, shapely and pointed, provide excellent

material for our purpose, and the Everyman *Anthology of Fables* by *Æsop and Others* (657) is a valuable book for the library of every class, whatever its age; for the idea that fables are exclusively nursery-stage fare is a modern fallacy. For young children there are such things as "The Frog and the Ox," and "The Birds in the Nest." For middles there are dozens—"The Fox and the Stork," "The Bundle of Sticks" (with a tricky speech to provide for the farmer to explain his motive near the end), "The Vixen Who thought the Old Fox was Dead," "The Vain Jackdaw," and the delectable story of "The Town Mice and the Country Mice," which can even include country dancing in the first scene and stately dancing in the second. For older ones there are also plenty. Almost the best example of all is "Jupiter and the Horse," though it needs some ingenuity to roll into a single scene instead of the series of short scenes which will certainly be the best thing children will suggest until they have done a good deal of work of this kind. "The Fox without a Tail" is adaptable for any age, and it is chosen as an example here because it can be made an excuse for the kind of public-meeting scene which lends itself to improvisation even better than that invaluable stand-by, the trial scene. The fact that this present meeting includes questions, heckling, and a disorderly end only makes it the more dramatic.

### The Fable

What follows is a conventional "dry" version of the fable:

A Fox, being caught in a trap, was glad to compound for his neck by leaving his tail behind him; but upon com-

ing abroad into the world, he began to be so sensible of the disgrace such a defect would bring upon him, that he almost wished he had died rather than come away without it. However, resolving to make the best of a bad matter, he called a meeting of the rest of the Foxes, and proposed that all should follow his example. "You have no notion," he said, "of the ease and comfort with which I now move about: I could never have believed it if I had not tried it myself; but really, when one comes to reason upon it, a tail is such an ugly, inconvenient, unnecessary appendage, the only wonder is that, as Foxes, we could have put up with it so long. I propose, therefore, my worthy brethren, that you all profit by the experience that I am most willing to afford you, and that all Foxes from this day forward cut off their tails." Upon this one of the oldest stepped forward, and said, "I rather think, my friend, that you would not have advised us to part with our tails, if there were any chance of recovering your own."

### Discussing the Plot

The general lay-out is plain. We merely need to devise a means for letting the audience know the opening facts. Also, the meeting sounds very flat, but that will be easy enough to work up in action. The opening is the thing. Children will certainly suggest showing the trapped fox and his escape, but this, even if it were pleasant, would spin things out too much. Obviously the opening time to choose is the moment of his return home minus a tail, when he is most sensible of his disgrace. How shall we make him arrive? Shall he run straight into the whole clan? That

would be crude and lack build-up. Besides, he wouldn't do it. He would want to spy out the land first. Much better to let his first contact be with one person. Then he can tell his sad story and give the audience the facts. The question is, whom shall he meet? Shall it be another fox? That would do. It might be fun, especially if the fox were a vixen, his wife. But it would lack contrast. Besides, it would be obviously better to choose an animal which prefers short tails and knows their advantages—for instance a bear, or a rabbit, or even both. They would be a well-contrasted pair, especially if Bun were sharp and Bruin dull. From one and the other Reynard would certainly catch the main notion, so that the audience could see the idea for the meeting *grow* in his mind—and seeing ideas grow is always fun. Having got rid of Rabbit, Reynard and Bruin could plot together—and seeing people plot together is always good drama. Bruin could even give Reynard some more arguments for his speech. That will involve repetition—and repetition almost always seems dull in drama except to small children, who love it. But this is repetition with a difference. We shall hear Reynard work up Rabbit's and Bruin's simple statements into something imposing though hypocritical—and developed repetition of that kind can be very amusing indeed.

Only one other structural point needs considering, though in class procedure we should probably hold it back and allow it to crop up at a convenient time: shall we mention Old Fox in good time, or merely let him pop up at the meeting when he is wanted? That would be feeble. Half the fun will lie in Reynard's fear of him, and his desire

to keep him quiet. That will give a dramatic thread.

The last question is, how shall we end? That is a question in every play, and often, as here, a problem. The implied end of the story is that the meeting peters out in ridicule, leaving Reynard high and dry. That is all very well in narrative, but drama needs something more definite if we are to avoid an effect of anticlimax. What are we to do? We might resort to three cheers—for, when in doubt, three cheers are a safe play ending, as good in their simple way as a dance. But three cheers for tails would not really clinch our present matter. Besides, there is Rabbit. The more amusing he was at the beginning, the more the audience will object if he does not come on again before the end. Why not use him to complete Reynard's discomfiture? It would be effective and satisfactory to see him again, and he would incidentally bring the play full circle to where it started—and full circle is the most satisfying of shapes.

## A Specimen Lay-out

On this basis of simple common-sense argument we lay out our action plot:

(1) A fox who has lost his tail in a trap arrives home very dejected and ashamed. He meets a bear, who asks him why he is so dismal. Reynard tells what has happened. A rabbit overhears and makes fun. Why is Reynard so miserable about having lost a nuisance of a tail? He ought to think himself lucky. Reynard is annoyed. What does he mean? He explains, but in so cheeky a style that Reynard goes for him and he exits. All the same, as Bruin points out, he is right. After hearing further argument, Reynard hits

on an idea: if only he could make all the other foxes take the point of view that tails are a nuisance he might even persuade them to get rid of their own.

How is that to be done? A meeting, Bruin suggests. Reynard leaps at the idea. He is conceitedly sure that he could talk them round. Only one thing worries him—Old Fox. Though deaf, he is sharp. If only he could be kept quiet till tails are safely off. . . . That is all right, Bear says: Old Fox is laid up with rheumatism. Still, he may come. If he does, what will be the best way to gag him? Be very nice, they decide, and get him to take the chair.

(2) They call the meeting. Foxes and vixens assemble. Reynard sits throughout this, because he must not reveal the state of his tail till the right moment.

Bruin is just preparing to open the proceedings when Old Fox appears. They try to make him take the chair, but he won't. He sees through the trick. All the same, they insist on his taking a seat at the table.

Rabbit also appears, but secretly so that no one sees him. His reactions will amuse the audience.

(3) The meeting. Bear introduces Reynard prosily.

Reynard stands up, keeping his back away from his audience. He makes a start, and at the right moment shows them that he has no tail. General surprise, which increases when he announces that he is glad of it.

The meeting is derisive. Only Old Fox is helpful, to Reynard's surprise.

In a clever speech Reynard wins them round till they are all ready to bite their tails off there and then. But he insists that someone shall propose a motion. Someone does. Who will

second it? Flushed with triumph, Reynard asks Old Fox to do so. He does—disastrously. The meeting breaks up in merry disorder.

(4) The rabbit reveals that he has heard everything, and mocks Reynard for being too clever by half.

This lay-out, which is used in the finished version given on pp. 283–290, would serve equally well for a play for times or for a sophisticated comedy. Which it will turn out to be will depend upon the class as a whole, and upon whatever outstanding dialogue sense is shown by individuals among its members. Most classes contain a few children who have the dialogue gift, by no means always the bright ones of whom one would expect it. They may not be effective actors, and they would almost certainly be unable to do the trick if we set them down with pencil and paper. How are we to tap their ability, and that of the class as a whole?

When described on paper the method looks limp, slow and ineffective. In practice it is limp and slow at first, but the reverse of ineffective in the not-so-long run. What is more, it is unwise to try to quicken the first slow limping stage. The children are finding their feet, and the extent to which they gather facility depends considerably on our leaving matters as far as possible to themselves. What follows will give an idea of how it works. It is worth careful note, since it embodies the whole method of dialogue-making as here advocated.

"All right," we say. "We have got the general idea for the play as a whole. Let us make a start. Whom shall we have for our first Reynard, Bruin, and



## DRAMATIZING A FABLE

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Bun? We may change them later, but that will settle itself."

Three children are chosen.

"Now think, everybody. Reynard has just arrived home very ashamed. He is going to meet Bruin and Bun. Shall we have them all on the stage when the curtains go back, or two of them, or Reynard only, perhaps?"

Almost certainly, and rightly, the class will decide on the one-by-one method, which is almost always preferable.

"Very well. On the stage, Reynard. Feel ashamed, look ashamed, and hide your tail—or where it ought to be. See Bruin coming. Are you pleased to see him?"

"No."

"Of course not. Say something, then."

Perhaps Reynard obliges, but quite probably he falls dumb. If so, we appeal to the class: "What could he say?"

"Couldn't he say, 'Oh, bother. Here's old Bruin'?" someone suggests.

"Right. Say that or something like it."

REYNARD: Oh, bother! Here's old Bruin. Now what does he want?

"Or he could run away," someone puts in.

"But that wouldn't start our play, would it? He could wonder if he had time to run off, or he could think that Bear might be useful. Or both. Say your piece again, Reynard, and put in a bit about that."

REYNARD: Oh, bother! Here's old Bruin. Now what does he want? What a nuisance! Have I got time to run away? No. Besides, I've got to see somebody some time, I suppose, so I may as well get it over.

"Good. Come in, Bruin. Say something."

BRUIN (*entering*): Good evening, Reynard.

SOMEONE: "Wouldn't it be more fun if he didn't see Reynard, and Reynard said 'Good evening' and made him jump?"

"Let's try it that way. Go off, Bruin, and then enter again. Then you ought to get on to the tail business."

REYNARD (*as Bruin enters*): Good evening, Brother Bruin.

BRUIN: What a start you gave me! Oh, it's you, Reynard. Good evening. Why, what's the matter with your tail?

"Is that all right?"

"No, because he couldn't see his tail at all."

Bruin naturally asks how can he get on to the tail if he can't see it, and someone suggests that he might ask what's the matter with him, and why is he standing like that.

BRUIN: Oh, what a start you gave me! Oh, it's you, Reynard. Good evening. Why, what's the matter with you? Why are you standing so funny? Anybody would think you were trying to hide your tail.

REYNARD: That's just what I am trying to do, Brother Bruin.

BRUIN: What for?

REYNARD: Because I've lost it, Brother Bruin.

BRUIN: Good gracious! Let me look. I say!—how did you do that?

So it goes on—and there in brief is the method of play making: first, discussion of idea, plot, and dramatic layout, second, provisional casting, and dialogue-making by means of impro-

visitation helped along by outside suggestion, as far as possible from the listeners or other players.

Even in the first attempt things run easily enough, though usually baldly, in the obvious parts, especially if one of the players develops a knack, as Bruin did here, of asking questions. It is when a step forward in subject-matter has to be taken that children usually need help. They have little idea of joining their conversational flats—and that is where we come in.

*Development speeds up quite soon, especially if we avoid the mistake of trying to cover too much ground at one time.* Thus, in the fox play, the first natural stopping-place is where Bun disappears—after the thirty-second speech in the complete version, on page 284. Here our best plan will be to say, "That makes a good start. We won't rush on. Let's have three new players and see what they make of that patch." The three are chosen. "You know how it went. Don't try too much to remember just what the others said. Make up your own words. I am hoping you will add to it."

And they probably will. Indeed, before long, all three will most likely be talking at once, and we shall have to put the brake on: "Steady there! All jabbering at once is very effective sometimes, but you must pipe down when something important has to be said, like that about the trap."

Jabbering of this kind is a step forward. Another stage shows itself when the players become so pleased with a patch that they tend to repeat it, and we need to impress the point that repeating oneself without good reason is bad drama. But that will not be yet. As soon as the first patch is satisfactory

we go on to the second. So, in due course, we shall come to the really difficult thing in the play, Reynard's speech at the meeting. Unless the class happens to include a natural speech-maker, this part will call for all shoulders to the wheel. Someone will probably have suggested that it would be good fun if Reynard borrowed sentences from Bun; if not, that is the kind of device we ourselves must prompt. The children will quickly realize that intentional repetition can be as effective as unintentional repetition is ineffective.

Two other stages need to be mentioned. The first is reached when the play is really beginning to take shape. Feeling safe, and being intent on developing their own parts, fluent children tend to talk too much. From the point of view of oral composition this is a valuable moment, for we can effectively point out to the whole class the importance of saying all that needs saying, and yet of being economical in words—and that is a real form of training in style.

The other stage has nothing to do with style, but a great deal to do with alertness and effective acting. It occurs when, as a result of repeated rehearsal, the play or a part of it is beginning to set into final shape. A moment comes in rehearsal when a character ought to say something essential, but forgets to do so, whereupon several people begin nodding and nudging. "No prompting," we say. "If Mary forgets to come in, steal her line and make it yours. It doesn't matter who speaks so long as you keep the ball rolling. That's a rule."

And a good rule too. Knowing that she is likely to be robbed, Mary will in future be on her toes to guard her pro-

perty, and the new alertness will not be confined to her alone. There is nothing like it for keeping teams alive, swift and adaptable.

### Pencil and Paper

This last stage is the earliest moment at which it is advisable to begin using the play as a basis for written composition. The method is the same as that sketched earlier in Chapter VI, but the whole thing is more adventurous and impulsive. "This play is good," we say. "Let's put it on paper before we forget the sound of it. Write as fast as you can. Then you may catch it really alive and kicking."

In short, our procedure is as different as possible from the bad old inhibitive method of demanding first-time invention, plus correctness of detail, plus neatness and avoidance of alteration. Instead of pen and ink and exercise books we use pencil, scribbling-paper and rubber, that excellent assistant in composition. For, far from discouraging alterations and second thoughts, we encourage them, and so induce discrimination and fastidiousness. In fact we allow children the same liberty as we allow ourselves when composing a difficult letter. By so doing we get them to regard words and rhythms as something vital, adaptable and important, as they cannot be expected to do if obsessed by the fear of mistakes and untidiness. Neatness is a virtue, but in the wrong place it can kill live composition. The time for it will come presently.

If the play is a very short one, the whole class may attempt to write down the whole thing in one burst, but if it is longer it is advisable to take it in sections, with a break for critical exami-

nation after each. Stopping as soon as the writing of a short section is completed, we ask someone to read out a speech or two, or we read it for them in our best style.

"Is that the best possible?" we ask. "If you think yours is better, don't be shy. Show a hand and let us hear it."

Someone reads a slightly different version.

"Is that better? . . . Why? How?"

The most frequent answer is, "It says it quicker."

"Terser," we say. "No words wasted. Anyone else?"

Another common criticism is: "It doesn't seem to follow on." This means that the speech in question fails to tie on neatly to the one before it, probably because the cue sentence has been pushed forward—a useful exemplification of the fact that words and sentences miss their real effect if they fail to achieve logical order. For such faults elaborate alterations are not necessary. A ring round the offending sentence and an arrow showing its true position are quite enough. Speed is almost everything.

Equally common is the discovery that something essential has been omitted. Here we are coping with what may be called long-distance logic or general structure. A caret and an insertion on the back of the paper will serve for correction.

When the dialogue of the section in hand has been passed as shipshape, we decide any stage directions and preliminaries which are necessary, underlining them, and perhaps combining them with a diagram. Again, although scissors and paste are the ideal expedients, carets and back-of-paper insertions will serve.

With still longer plays, when it would take too long for everyone to write down the whole thing section by section, it is best to allot different sections to different groups, everyone possibly working on any part, such as Reynard's speech, which is of special importance.

Whatever the procedure, the end is the same. Everyone makes a fair copy of at least a part of the finished product, and the fairest copy of all is bound up to take a proud place in the class archives.

## **Total Achievement**

To those who have not used some such method as this, two doubts may occur. The first is whether there will be enough to show for it in terms of written work. At least in the average school, the answer that a little live composition is worth any amount of the

other kind is inadequate. A more pertinent answer is that although results may be meagre at the immediate outset, improvement soon begins in respect of bulk. Children quickly become so keen on the work, and take such individual and collective pride in it, that they devote to it many odd minutes which would otherwise be wasted, while those who have out-of-school leisure frequently do much in their own time.

The second doubt is whether practice in writing dramatic dialogue will increase facility in routine types of composition. Here the answer is an emphatic affirmative. The child whose ear and mind are awake to the fact that words are living things can be depended upon to show that awareness in all branches of work.

Not less important is the gain in general observation, adaptability, and interest in human nature.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# SHAPING A PLOT

THE foregoing dramatization of a fable will serve as an example of how, with a little ingenuity and observation of character, quite an impressive result may be based upon the simplest material. Fables are especially handy because they are usually so compact and straightforward in structure. So are a number of other famous stories. Two obvious examples for younger players are "The Three Bears" and "Little Red Riding Hood." Both suffer from having parts which children of the more sensitive type do not like, but these can easily be avoided. In "Little Red Riding Hood" there is no need for the wolf to eat Grandmother. Much better to have the old lady feeling so much better that she goes out for a walk just before the wolf arrives at her cottage, arriving back just in time to see his ignominious exit, and to join with Red Riding Hood, the Huntsman, and a few Neighbours in a cheerful celebration, which ends the play pleasantly.

"The Three Bears" is easier still, for whereas "Little Red Riding Hood" needs three scenes—Red Riding Hood's home, the forest, and Grandmother's cottage—it can be played entirely in the Three Bears' House, with the major part of the acting space serving as living-room, and one corner as bedroom. Here the unsatisfactory piece is the end, for Goldilocks running away with the bears after her is, dramatically

speaking, no ending at all. A better plan here is to have Little Bear chiding his parents roundly for their nasty idea of eating Goldilocks: he has always wanted someone to play with, he says, and now here she is. Couldn't they ask her to stay to breakfast and play? The parents agree, and the play ends with Mother preparing a second edition of breakfast, and Father sitting blandly looking on while Goldilocks and Little Bear dance or play a game.

For rather older children the easiest and most famous examples are "Cinderella" and "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." Both need several sets, but that does not matter in the classroom, and is of little importance on the stage if a curtain background is used and the trappings are kept simple.

Many other stories are almost equally good, given a little ingenuity in shaping into dramatic form. For our present purpose it will be worth while to take what at first glance looks like an impossibly intractable piece of material, the Grimms' story of "The King of Norway's Bear," and see how it may, in fact, be shaped into a good plot.

Like so many of their stories, this one is rather unhandily organized, beginning with what is really the secondary or assistant theme (the bear), and not coming to the real subject until later in the narrative. Here is the story very briefly told and in more logical order:

There was once an old woodman who had a good wife, a pleasant and well-stocked cottage, poultry, a pig, and bees in the hive.

No one could have been more comfortable until a certain house-pixy took up his abode with them. All they saw of him was one shoe with a red heel, but he made himself most painfully seen and heard, shouting songs, breaking crockery and furniture, putting out the fire by slopping soup from the hanging pot, twisting the pig's ear, loosing the chickens, smashing the eggs, upsetting the beehives, and letting the washing into the mud. And his appetite was enormous.

Only one thing he never interfered with after the first time, and that was the woodman's white cat, which had one kitten at the time.

At last the Woodman lost his temper, and in spite of his wife's warnings snatched at the Pixy's shoe. He was at once knocked down with a sledge-hammer blow. This was too much for the Goodwife. She would not stay there any longer, she said, and they moved to another cottage, much to the pleasure of the Pixy, who preferred the house to himself.

Some time later, homeward bound on a wintry evening, the Woodman was asked for lodging by Gunther, a bear leader, who was taking a polar bear as a present from the King of Norway to the King of Denmark. The Woodman said he dare not take the bear home: his wife would be terrified. Besides, his cat was just expecting kittens again. But he told Gunther about the old cottage, which was still empty. The Pixy was strong, he said, but Gunther looked able to take care of himself, to say nothing of the bear.

The Pixy was out when the two men and the animal reached the cottage, and Gunther made a fire. The Woodman eventually went home, and Gunther settled to supper, the bear curling up on the hearth.

Presently the Pixy returned, and was much annoyed to find one of the old cat's kittens, as he thought, monopolizing his hearth. Gunther was not to be seen, having nipped behind the log chest. The bear took little notice of the Pixy until he received a whack over the snout with the poker. A tremendous battle followed, which the Pixy might have won had he kept his temper and husbanded his strength. But that was not his way, and eventually he ran for his life, leaving Gunther and the bear at peace till they went on their way in the morning.

Later the Woodman came across the Pixy singing dismally in the forest. The creature asked him whether his cat had any more kittens like that, and the Woodman, not knowing the point, said, "Yes, five." Whereupon the Pixy retreated at great speed, vowing that he would never come that way again. So the Woodman and his wife returned to their first home and lived happily ever after.

For stage presentation the bear would call for the largest available boy dressed in off-white teddy-bear cloth or towelling, with a golden collar round his neck.

Shall we have the Pixy invisible, as the story says? It would in fact be great fun to do so, representing him only by a voice, sound effects, and "stunt" effects of knocking over furniture and so on, the fight being left to the bear to mime; but for practical purposes it

would be better to have him visible in a well-padded and humped costume to make him squat and ugly.

As is so often the case, the first thing we need to settle is the time range. Over what period of time need the action extend? In the story it extends from summer to winter, but it will be handier for us to make do with a single evening and the next morning. To do this we shall need, as we almost always do need, to start as close as possible to the first climax point, merely allowing ourselves opening time to supply the audience with the necessary information.

In the same way we shall do well to limit the scene of action. In the story it ranges from forest to garden to cottage. On the stage we shall do better to compress it into the living-room of the cottage. How will this serve?—

## SCENE I

*The cottage living-room near sunset on  
an autumn evening*

The curtains part on a scene of desolation: the cottage in the last stages of house-moving. Except for the log chest near the fire, nothing remains but a stool or two and an old box. (This, incidentally, disposes of all furniture difficulties.) The fire is out and the stage empty.

Presently the Woodman is heard whistling or singing as he comes home. Outside he shouts to his wife. No answer. He comes in, and is mystified. What has happened? He shouts again. Still no answer. He goes into the inner room, still shouting.

The Goodwife enters and answers his call. He comes in. She is in a great state. "What has happened?" "What hasn't happened!" "Is it that Pixy

again?" "It is." "What has he been doing now?" "What hasn't he been doing!" Then follows a lively emotional account of the Pixy's goings-on in house and garden since the morning. At last, the Goodwife concludes, the creature took himself off. She decided she couldn't bear it any more, and she went and found out about the empty cottage on the other side of the hill, arranged everything, got old John with his cart, and moved the furniture, fowls, and beehive. All that remains is the pig and a stool or two. The new cottage is a poor place, but it isn't so bad with a fire burning and Snowdrop asleep in her basket on the rug. "Has she had her kittens yet?" asks the husband. "No," says the wife, but it won't be long, she fancies.

So far so good. In a lively and natural way we have put across the necessary immediate information. Now we must go back farther and let the audience know more about the Pixy and his attitude towards the cat and her kittens. This last will not be easy, but the first is not difficult. Emotion will do the trick once more. The Woodman says what a day the Goodwife has had. She must be tired out. "But cheer up. You will soon have the new cottage as nice as this was, if not nicer."

This is too much for the Goodwife. Collapsing on to a stool, she lapses into retrospective (and highly informative) lamentation. "It won't," she says. "To think how lovely this cottage was until midsummer last!" and so on, descriptively. "And then that Pixy planted himself on us, and it has never been the same since. He has interfered with everything. Everything."

"Everything but old Snowdrop."

"Well, that's no thanks to him. He

ried—but he knew when he was beaten.”

“Aye,” says the husband. “He will never forget that, ha ha!—how the Pixy tried meddling with Snowdrop, and what a time she gave him. Master Pixy will never meddle with her again, or with her kitten, at least while she is about.” (All of which may not be strictly probable talk just now, but the cat-kitten information must somehow be put safely across, so the Goodwife lets him go on until the audience knows enough. Then she cuts him short.)

It’s all very well for him to laugh, she says, but it is no laughing matter—and off she goes into grief again, he comforting her as best he can.

The ground being prepared, it is now time to get on with action. The Pixy is heard singing raucously off. There he is again! Suppose he goes with them!—a dreadful thought. The pig is heard squealing piteously. The Pixy is twisting the poor creature’s ear again. This is too much for the Woodman. He will have that Pixy’s blood if it is the last thing he does. The Goodwife does her best to stop him—the Pixy is as strong as an ox, etc. But the Woodman dodges her and rushes into the garden, leaving the Goodwife to do lively descriptive terror business on stage. Next moment the Pixy pops on, the Woodman chasing him with a spade. The Pixy trips him, sending the spade flying, there is a brief stand-up fight, and the Woodman is knocked out, Wife kneeling over him very vocal, Pixy laughing uproariously. His last words before exit are, “Moving, are you? Well, I’ll be back later with my supper, and if you are not clear by then I’ll clear you. And you needn’t think I am coming with you to your new place, because I’m not.

I always wanted this house for myself,” etc.—gratuitous but useful.

The husband comes round. He is all right, he says. Let his wife take the stools and he will follow with the pig. They both go out by the back door, she with all but one stool. The next moment Gunther is knocking at the front door. Getting no answer, he puts his head in and comes in. The husband returns.

Gunther explains his business. “Poly bear?” says the Woodman. “What’s a poly bear?” Gunther will show him. He brings in the bear, and there is comedy of the Woodman’s being frightened and then finding terror unnecessary. But all the same, as he explains, not forgetting the cat, it would never do to take the bear home. The arrangement about staying here is made, and then, as it is conveniently getting dark, the Woodman lights a candle end in a bottle neck, and, while Gunther lights the fire, gets a half-loaf and heel of cheese—all the provisions left in the larder—talking about the Pixy the while, and mentioning where the pump is. He then goes, his last words being that he will look in in the morning to see what sort of night they have had—if they have not gone by then.

Gunther busies himself for a moment and the bear curls up in front of the fire. Then the Pixy is heard singing off. Gunther puts out the candle and crouches behind the log chest. The Pixy enters, by firelight only, exulting over the fine supper he has stolen. After putting it on the box for a table he lights the candle—and sees the bear. He makes it clear that he thinks it is Snowdrop’s kitten, much grown, and is indignant at its having been left



behind. He is nervous at meddling with it, but he cannot resist—and then the fun begins, Gunther adding to it by furtively appearing now and then above the log chest. The fight, all the more effective for being in firelight only, ends as in the story, and the scene closes with Gunther settling down to eat the Pixy's supper, the bear sitting by.

## SCENE 2

### *The same, next morning*

Gunther is preparing to go when the Woodman cautiously appears. Is it all right?—then he will bring his wife to see the poly bear. He calls her in, and there is the comedy of getting her to pat it. Gunther briefly tells what happened, adding that he does not think the Pixy will return. The Goodwife is not so sure about that. They bid Gunther farewell and he goes on his way.

While they are there, the Goodwife says, they will collect one or two odds and ends. They are just doing so when the Pixy is heard singing his song in a dismal voice. They hide and he comes

in, a sight to see. Hearing a sound, he pops behind the log chest. They appear and he comes out. What a sight he looks, they say. What has he been doing? The Pixy's lame attempt to account for his dishevelment gives scope for comedy. Then, for no reason that is apparent to them, he suddenly asks if Snowdrop has any *more* kittens. Five, they tell him, five beauties. This throws him into a mixture of rage and fear. He rates them soundly for their dreadful behaviour, and declares that he will leave the district this very day and never come back—and he goes. They can't believe it, but there is no mistaking his determination, and they begin a brief but delighted discussion of how they will return and make the cottage better than ever before. Presently they are merrily dancing round. A nice and unexpected touch will be to make them, just as the curtain is about to close, wonder what was the point of his question about the kittens. They cannot understand it at all.

## CHAPTER NINE

# HOME-MADE PLAYS

SO far we have relied for our plots, and to some extent for our dialogue, upon literary crutches of greater or less strength. We can do excellent work even if we never go past adaptation of one sort and another, but we miss a most stimulating experience if we flinch from the final step to independent play making.

Play *making*, not play *writing*. As has already been suggested, play writing is a waste of time unless very rare and unusual talent is available. Besides, play writing is an individual activity, and what we are after is communal work. A class may take pleasure in acting even a poor play by one of themselves or by their teacher. But it is nothing to their pride in even a single scene in the making of which everyone has had a share, however small. And very often there is good reason for pride, since orally made plays, based on well-rehearsed improvisation, are apt to be much more alive than the average written play.

With classes which have been led along such a dramatic road as has been sketched in the preceding chapters, the idea of making plays "out of their heads" is neither new nor startling. It happens naturally. But such conditions are unfortunately not common, and the idea of building an entirely original play is apt to be regarded as fantastic. How shall we break down that notion and show the way to invention? Actually it is not difficult.

*Spoken charades* make a good introduction. They are a natural development from dumb charades. Indeed, they are really easier than the dumb form. Ask teams to try their hands at preparing specimens ready for recreation periods, warning them not to be tied down by the tiresome old convention of dragging the charade word itself into the dialogue. Sooner or later a really good specimen comes along. "That is good," we say. "If we worked at it a little, it would be first-class. The dialogue is all there. It merely needs pulling together and pruning. Take the first scene again." Then, after a certain improvement is apparent: "That is too good to lose. We must keep a copy." The result may become item one in a Class Charade Book, which, even if it does not itself go far, may lead to class dramatic work of unusual value.

### Adding Words to Mimes

Another profitable approach is based upon the fact that one of the surest ways of making children talk, in dialogue form or otherwise, is to forbid them to do so. For example, we may ask a group to mime a person walking along a lonely road on a dark and frosty night, slipping, sustaining an injury, and lying there until discovered by a group of strangers.

We say to the class, "Half a dozen people are going to mime an incident for you to see if you can make out what

it is all about. Of course it would be much easier for them if words were allowed, but they are not, not even sounds."

The last sentence is, of course, pure cunning, intended to put the idea of dialogue into their heads. Incidentally it is true. This mime obviously does cry aloud for words, and our veto raises the players' desire to use them to a point where they are almost certain to be heard muttering dialogue under their breath. "No dialogue now!" we say. "Cheating!" This usually ends in an exasperated child saying, "Sir, *couldn't* we use dialogue?" Whereupon we graciously say, "Well, if you feel you can't do without it, I don't *mind*. But not today. Do the scene again next time and polish up some dialogue beforehand. And if you like to decide where to take him, home or hospital, do. I wonder why he was out, and where he was going in such a hurry. But this won't do. You will be making a whole play if you aren't careful."

And, there, by the use of a little guile and psychology, we are right on the high road to our goal.

### Proverb Plays

These provide another good approach, especially with a class which has dramatized a fable. In the course of a talk about proverbs we can say, "When you come to think about it, a proverb is the seed of a fable. Take the saying, 'Many hands make light work.' We ought to be able to make up a story to show how true that is. And then we might be able to turn it into a small play."

The specimen given on page 290 is only one of several possible applications. It is of the repetitive kind which,

however tedious in performance, small children delight in.

Like most proverbs, this has an opposite. "Too many cooks spoil the broth" asks for comical exemplification. One well-known attempt runs as follows:

Hans was due to be married. When his new trousers came home from the tailor's he found that they were three inches too long, and he asked the womenfolk to shorten them. But they were, of course, much too busy on the wedding eve to attend to a mere man. But when at last they had retired weary to bed, they were attacked by conscience. First Mother came down and cut off three inches. Then Granny, then various sisters. The scene next morning can be imagined—and invented.

That is a mediaeval story. So is the one about a whole family individually seasoning the soup to taste. But there is no need to use these. A little ingenuity will suggest others.

### Developing an Idea

So, little by little, we reach the point where we feel ready to make our entirely original play without even a charade word or proverb to help us. The best way is to take an idea, fit it up with characters, and let them develop a story to fit themselves and it. Ideas are two a penny. The thing is to recognize their dramatic possibilities and mould them into practicable shape. For instance, the class may have been looking at a newspaper photograph of a hero who appears, as heroes are apt to look, insignificant. Scenting the possibility of a play, steer the talk into a discussion with instances, for such talkabouts are always likely to throw up

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dramatic material. The result may be a simple dramatized anecdote, or something such as any top Junior class might produce if astutely steered. Let us purposely guide the discussion towards something a little intricate.

*Teacher:* Not many heroes do look like heroes. Nelson, for example.

This prompts other examples, not all historical.

*Teacher:* You notice the same thing about acting. Some of the best actors look as if they couldn't act at all, but when they get going they seem to change. Do you remember So-and-so?

The discussion runs to more examples.

*Teacher:* I should think we might get a play out of that—a child who had never shown any sign of being able to act suddenly proves that she can act when the need arises. I wonder how the need arose.

*A suggestion:* Perhaps a class like ours was rehearsing a play, and the chief character fell out a day or two before performance. Who can they get to act the part?

*A Child:* Suppose the producer was one of the children. He would know the part pretty well. He could do it.

*Teacher:* But they would know that he could act. There wouldn't be any surprise in that, and it would get away from our good idea. We had better invent some reason why the producer couldn't take the part. What could it be?

*A Child:* Suppose it was a school drama competition, and they had a rule that producers mustn't act in their own plays.

*Teacher:* That's fine. Well, who is to fill the part? It must be somebody who

knew the words, but the rest didn't know he could act. Or it might be she, of course.

*Suggestion, encouraged or otherwise:* It might be the prompter.

*Teacher:* Yes. I wonder why they didn't know she was any good.

*Suggestion:* Perhaps she was a very quiet person.

*Suggestion:* Or she was shy.

*Suggestion:* Perhaps she was someone rather new in the class.

*Teacher:* It might be all three. Good. We are getting on. What will the scene be?

*Suggestion:* They are having a rehearsal, and the chief actor doesn't turn up.

*Teacher:* How do they find out that he may not be able to be in the play at all? Does he come on and tell them, or does somebody else bring the news?

*Suggestion:* Somebody else had better.

*Teacher:* That means somebody else late. I hope this rehearsal was not in school hours!

*Suggestion:* Perhaps it was an extra rehearsal on a Saturday morning.

*Teacher:* That would do. Only one other thing. What play are they rehearsing?

*Suggestion:* Couldn't we use a play we know? Then we could use a bit out of it.

*Teacher:* It ought to have a good fiery speech in it. "The Discontented Bees" would do.\* We haven't settled how to end our play yet. But never

\* So would plenty of other plays. *The Discontented Bees* is used in the specimen version on page 292 simply for the convenience of the fact that it is by the present writer. A dramatization of one of Mrs. Gatty's *Parables from Nature*, it is included in *Reading-Scenes from Famous Stories*, Book II (Reading and Doing Series: Bell).

mind. Let's make a start, and we will settle that later.

## Dialogue Making

So much for the first step of original play making, which consists of discussion with instances. Older children, who have learned the procedure, are often handy enough in steering these discussions playwards, but with young or inexperienced children the steering devolves upon the teacher. (But steering does not mean supplying wind and cargo as well. The more we elicit from the children themselves, the better, and the greater the educational value of the preparatory stage.)

It will be noted that no attempt is made to complete the discussion or to tidy it up. We merely keep it going until enough plot stuff has emerged to make action possible. There are two reasons for this. One is that after a certain point discussion becomes tedious. The second is that too much initial planning has a cramping effect and tends to eliminate the unexpected and often valuable developments which so frequently spring from the excitement of action.

The process of dialogue making is precisely like that sketched in the making of a fable or proverb play. Indeed, our project has already taken proverb play making form, the plot having resolved itself into something very like an exemplification of the text which states that the first shall be last and the last first. The same can be said of most plays which have an idea behind them, for it is usually reducible to a proverb or something very like it. This is worth mentioning, because, once one has developed the point of view, one can often borrow the basic idea of a

published play and get it translated into classroom terms—a legitimate form of borrowing, since something will develop which is quite different from the original author's treatment. That is why it is much better to insinuate the root idea into discussion than to present the class with the plot ready made. The children have nothing to limit their invention, while we have the comfortable knowledge that the idea is dramatically practicable.

Our first question as we move towards action always is, what characters shall we certainly need? In the present instance they are the Producer, the Prompter who is to become the hero or heroine, the bringer of the bad news, and at least enough other people to play all the Discontented Bee characters except the Traveller—the absentee's part, a Reader, an Old Relation, two or more Sentinel Bees, and any number of Young Bees for the crowd, five of whom speak.

We make a beginning: "A Saturday-morning rehearsal of 'The Discontented Bees' is about to begin. The scene is a classroom or any place where they might rehearse. The stage is crowded with players saying over their parts, and that kind of thing. The Prompter is in her corner. Shall we have the Producer on when the curtains go back, or shall we bring him on in a minute or two?"

*Decision:* Bring him on in a minute or two.

"Very well. On the stage, everyone who should be. The curtains are just going to open. Go on, everybody. Move about, do things, say things. Good. The curtains are opening. Keep going. Somebody wonders whether the Producer is coming, or will he be late.

Somebody else sees him through the glass door. That prepares his entry and lets the audience know who he is. In you come, Producer. Say something to get things started."

If he obliges, good. If he doesn't, we ask the rest to help him out as usual, and gradually we build up some such play as "The Dark Horse"—or it might be called "Rehearsal"—which appears on page 292. In reading this through it will be worth while to notice two slight technical points: first, how the necessary preliminary information is put across, completing itself in the speech; "He knows the competition is on Tuesday"; second, how Jenny is slightly featured before she is wanted, in the seven speeches beginning: "Where's the Prompter?" That is better and more convincing than making her jump out of the nowhere into here just when she is really wanted.

Everything goes obviously and easily until it is time to begin to steer our play towards its conclusion. How are we to end? That will, of course, be matter for discussion. The class will probably not be helpful at this point, for children are scanty in constructional ideas, but a prompt from us will set the ball rolling: "I should think the audience will want to know what happened about Tom in the competition—whether he took the part after all, or whether Jenny did."

The solution in the given version is the result of the following discussion decisions:

that Tom didn't have to go away after all;

that everybody felt that Jenny was even better than Tom had been—which was rather awkward;

that the audience would like to feel that Jenny played the part in the end;

that it would be nice for Tom to be generous and stand down of his own accord, which has a better taste than if he were peevish about it;

that it would be a shame to shut him out of the competition altogether, though. Hence the adjustment that he is in another play as well, and the after-thought insertion of something about that in the earlier part of the play.

The device of having Tom enter unnoticed during Jenny's big speech would, in nine cases out of ten, be a teacher's suggestion. It is useful because, apart from being dramatically effective, it saves us from the tail-off into mere congratulatory babble which would inevitably follow if Jenny were allowed to finish her speech. To break from climax to last lap is often good tactics: it avoids sags.

Here, then, is a quite effective play made out of slight material. As we gain experience we get into the habit of seeing dramatic possibilities where we should before have overlooked them. The initial difficulty of finding play-making material soon vanishes. Not only we, but our children too, come to realize that the possibilities are endless. Everyday life bristles with them, and becomes the more interesting for the realization. Rich mines are to be found also in geography, scripture, and history—especially history. The field has no hedges. There is neither space nor need to explore these possibilities. All that can be done in conclusion is to give one or two simple playlets as specimens—the kind which any average class can make, always provided that it has a teacher with enough spirit of adventure to take the initial step.

### Specimen Plays

What follows is a top-Junior version of the fable play which was plotted in Chapter VII.

#### TAILS, OR NO TAILS?

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

Scene: A woodland clearing

Time: A summer evening

Characters in order of appearance:

Reynard, the fox without a tail

Bruin, a bear

Bun, a rabbit

Rust

Red

Blacktip

} Three foxes

Any number of other Foxes and

Vixens and Cubs

Old Fox

Announcer (optional)

(The Announcer appears before the curtain.)

ANNOUNCER: Ladies and gentlemen, we beg to present a comedy we have made out of one of Æsop's fables. It is not a very well-known one, but I hope you will think, as we do, that it makes a good play.

Please imagine when the curtains go back that you are looking on a woodland clearing on a summer evening.

Ladies and gentlemen, our play: "Tails, or No Tails?"

#### CURTAINS PART

(After a moment's pause REYNARD puts his head cautiously round a corner and looks and listens. Then he sidles on to the stage, carefully keeping his face to the audience. He looks dishevelled and thoroughly furtive. He hears someone coming.)

REYNARD (in a whisper): Bruin! Bother the bear! Why does he want to

come strolling this way now? I have I time to slip away? No. I had better stand back and hope he doesn't see me. Or wait a minute. Perhaps he might be useful. He's a dull old lump, but he may do. At any rate, he can't do any harm.

(He presses himself well against the back, somewhere near the side where BRUIN is entering, his hands behind him, humming a tune as he takes his evening walk. REYNARD does not move until BRUIN is almost disappearing on the far side. Then he speaks most distantly:)

REYNARD: Good evening, Brother Bruin.

BRUIN: Bless my heart! Who's that? You startled me. Why, it's Brother Reynard. A lovely evening, isn't it?

REYNARD: Is it, Brother Bruin?

BRUIN: Why, what's the matter with you? Come here where a bear can see you. . . . Why, you look as if you hadn't had a square meal for a week. Turn round and let's have a look at you.

REYNARD: I'd rather not turn round, Brother Bruin, if you don't mind.

BRUIN: Why not? Anyone would think something had happened to your tail.

REYNARD: Brother Bruin! How did you know?

BRUIN: I didn't. What is it?

(REYNARD turns slowly round, so that his back shows to the audience.)

BRUIN: Bless my heart, you've lost it! How did you do that?

REYNARD: It was taken from me.

(BUN appears secretly on the far side, all ears.)

BRUIN: What by?

REYNARD: A trap.

BRUIN (sitting on the middle of a log): Ah, nasty things, traps. Never

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mind. You are over the worst of it. It has healed up nicely. Soon you won't notice you haven't got one.

REYNARD: Do you mind moving up so that I can sit by you?

BRUIN: Certainly.

REYNARD: You see, I don't want anyone to *see*. I can just imagine how they will laugh.

BUN: Ha-ha-ha!

REYNARD: Who's that?

BUN (*coming on and squatting at a safe distance*): Me. Excuse my laughing, won't you?

BRUIN: I don't think it is very nice of you to laugh at anyone in trouble, Bun.

BUN: Who's in trouble?

BRUIN: Why, Reynard, of course.

BUN: What's he in trouble about?

BRUIN: Because he hasn't got a tail.

BUN: Well, have I got a tail—at least any tail to speak of? And am I in trouble about it? Not much! Fancy me with a bushy tail! I should look like a squirrel.

REYNARD: Foxes are different. Foxes always have tails.

BUN: Yes, and what good do they do them? What good did yours do you? If you hadn't had a tail, you wouldn't have been trapped. That's all the good tails are: to get in traps and pick up mud. In fact they're just a nuisance, *and* you know it. You pretend to be proud of your precious tails, but you're not. You're ashamed of them, and you show it.

REYNARD: What do you mean, you silly thing?

BUN: Well, when you are ashamed of yourself, what do you do? Tuck your tail down. When the huntsman is about, what do you do? Tuck your tail down. When the hounds are after you, what do you do? Tuck your tail down.

And now you're grumbling because you have been lucky enough to lose the silly thing. You make me laugh. Ha-ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!

REYNARD: If you don't stop that row, I'll give you what for, my lad.

BUN: Oh no, you won't, Master Reynard. I'm going. Good-bye. Ha-ha-ha!

(*He pops out as REYNARD runs after him.*)

REYNARD: That rabbit wants taking down a peg.

BRUIN: All the same, what he says is right, you know, and you will see it when you have had time to get used to it. Before a week's out I shouldn't be surprised to hear you crowing over the other fellows: "It's fine not to be bothered with a tail. You ought to try it, boys."

REYNARD: Brother Bear!

BRUIN: What's the matter?

REYNARD: You've given me a simply splendid idea. I'll tell them all about it. I *will* crow over them. I'll hold a meeting. Before you know where you are, they'll all be biting their tails off. I'll see to that. Trust me!

BRUIN: But are you really glad you haven't a tail?

REYNARD: Really glad? Of course I'm not really glad. Would anybody be glad not to have a tail if he could have one?

BRUIN (*huffily*): You seem to forget that I have next to no tail, Master Reynard.

REYNARD: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean that, of course. I wasn't talking about bears. I was talking about foxes. They're not clever like you, you see. You can talk them into believing anything. You leave that to me. I'm clever, I am.

BRUIN: Not too clever, I hope.



## HOME - MADE PLAYS

REYNARD: Oh, trust me. There's only one of our crowd I'm a bit shy about—old Fox.

BRUIN: Oh, he's as old as the hills and as deaf as a post.

REYNARD: All the same, he's smart. I'd rather he didn't come to the meeting.

BRUIN: As a matter of fact, I don't think you need worry. The last I heard he was laid up with rheumatism.

REYNARD: Good. And if by chance he does come we must butter him up. We might get him to be chairman. He couldn't do much harm then, could he? If he doesn't come, perhaps you would take the chair yourself.

BRUIN: With pleasure. That is a thing I feel I can do—take the chair. I seem to carry weight, you know.

REYNARD: You do!

BRUIN: When is this meeting to be?

REYNARD: No time like the present. Leave it to me. There's one of the boys coming this way now. It looks like Red. He's simple. I'll talk to him. You go off and finish your walk and come back after a bit. I'll have everything ready.

BRUIN: Very well.

REYNARD: And if you see any of the boys, tell them to come this way.

BRUIN: I will. Trust me. (*Exit.*)

REYNARD (*sitting down and shouting off the other way*): This way to the meeting! This way to the grand general meeting! Bring your own stools. Bring your own chairs. This way to the meeting!

RED (*entering*): Hallo, what's all this about a meeting?

REYNARD: What? Haven't you heard? You *are* behind the times.

RED: Can I come?

REYNARD: Well, if you like to get me a chairman's table and a little bell, I'll

fit you in as a favour. But don't go telling everybody I did, or we shall be packed out.

RED: I won't. Thank you very much Reynard. (*Exit.*)

REYNARD: That ought to set him chattering all right.

(*Enter RUST and BLACKTIP on the other side.*)

REYNARD: Hallo, Rust! Hallo, Blacktip! How are you? Excuse my not getting up, will you? I'm a bit tired.

RUST: Where have you been all this time?

REYNARD: Where have I been? Where haven't I been! I've had a marvellous holiday.

BLACKTIP: What's all this meeting old Bruin was saying? What's it about?

REYNARD: Ah, you'd like to know, wouldn't you! You'll see. Just help me give another shout, will you?

ALL THREE: This way to the meeting! This way to the grand general meeting! Bring your own stools. Bring your own chairs. This way to the meeting!

(RED *staggers on with a table and bell.*)

RED: Just in time! There's a whole crowd of them coming.

REYNARD: Thanks, Red. Put it here in front of the log, will you? That's fine.

RED: Where can I sit?

REYNARD: Oh, anywhere in a corner. Go on shouting, boys.

RUST and BLACKTIP: This way to the meeting! This way to the grand general meeting! Bring your own stools. Bring your own chairs. This way to the meeting!

(BEAR *returns during this.*)

BEAR: Are we ready? There's a whole crowd coming.

# VARIED FORMS OF DRAMATIC WORK

REYNARD: Here they are.

(Enter FOXES, VIXENS, and CUBS from both sides, some carrying stools and all chattering loudly.)

BEAR: Take your seats, ladies and gentlemen, take your seats, please.

(He and RUST and BLACKTIP marshal them into good order. Then BEAR sits at the table. He and REYNARD look behind them rather anxiously, but they do not see any sign of OLD FOX, so they decide to go ahead. BEAR rings the bell. As he begins to speak BUN crawls secretly on just in front of the front curtain on the same side of the stage as the chairman's table, taking care not to be seen by BRUIN and REYNARD.)

BEAR (heavily): Foxes, Vixens, and Cubs, I am very glad—er—I am very glad to—er—to see so many of you here this—er—

BUN: Evening. Hear, hear! (Every-one look the way where BUN is not.)

BEAR: There is no need for me to introduce Brother Reynard. We all know Reynard.

BUN: Ha-ha!

BEAR: He has been away on a holiday, and he has made a great discovery. He wants to tell you about it. Now you don't want me to take up your time—

BUN: Hear, hear!

REYNARD: Who is that?

(OLD FOX just appears on the far side. If he can be pushed on in a wheel chair, so much the better. If not, he comes on on sticks. He has an ear trumpet.)

OLD FOX: Well, well, well! Now, now, now!

BRUIN and REYNARD (disgustedly): Old Fox!

REYNARD: Ah! Old Fox! Come over here, sir. Come over here.

(OLD FOX crosses.)

REYNARD: I hoped you would come, sir. I wanted you to be Chairman.

OLD FOX: Wanted me to be what?

REYNARD: Chairman!

OLD FOX: That's very nice of you, very nice indeed. But no, I don't think I will, thank you all the same. A chairman isn't really free to say what he thinks—and that is what I always like to do. I'll just sit up here near the table so that I shan't miss anything. . . . Thank you, that will do nicely. Now, what's the meeting all about?

BRUIN: I was just saying: Brother Reynard has been away on a holiday and has made a great discovery. I was just going to say what his speech is about.

OLD FOX: Go on, then.

BRUIN: Foxes, Vixens, and Cubs, the subject of Brother Reynard's talk will be—er—Tails.

OLD FOX: Snails?

BRUIN: No! Tails!

OLD FOX: Oh! What are they about?

BRUIN: Not tales: tails—t-a-i-l-s.

OLD FOX: Oh—the sort he's sitting on.

(The audience giggles.)

OLD FOX: Now then! Now then!—no giggling there at the back. Order! Chair!

BRUIN: Well, as I was saying, you don't want to hear me. . . .

OLD FOX: Hear, hear!

BRUIN: So—Brother Reynard.

ALL: Chi-yi-yi-yi! (That is their way of applauding.)

REYNARD: Foxes, and Vixens of—er—all ages: as you know, I am not one for making speeches, like some we know. (He looks at OLD FOX.)

ALL: Chi-yi-yi-yi!

OLD FOX: No, no!

## H O M E - M A D E   P L A Y S

REYNARD: And when I came home today, a speech was the last thing I thought of making. It was my good friend Bruin who insisted, so you must blame him. As he has told you, my subject is Tails—or at any rate, my own tail. While I have been away I have had something done to it, and I feel sure, when you see it, you will all agree that it is a great improvement. I have gone in for the sort of tail you all should have. I will show you. *(He jumps on to the table and turns his back on his audience.)*

*(There is an astonished pause, then a great hubbub.)*

Why, he hasn't got one.	} etc.
Where's it gone?	
He hasn't got a tail at all.	
Bobtail!	
What a sight!	
Ha-ha-ha!	

*(BRUIN rings bell.)*

OLD FOX: Order! Order! Chair! Order!

SHARP-EAR: Do you mean to tell us we ought to have our tails off?

REYNARD: That is exactly what I do mean, Brother Sharp-ear.

ALL: Chi-yi-yi-yi-yi!

SLEEK: Now isn't that nice! He wants us to be like the three blind mice and cut off our tails with a carving knife.

*(Hubbub again, BEAR ringing bell.)*

Rubbish!	} etc.
Nonsense!	
Sit down!	
Ha-ha-ha!	

OLD FOX: Order! Order! Chair! Order! Come on, now, boys. Give him a hearing. Let's know what he has to say. Fair's fair.

REYNARD: Thank you, sir. My

friends, I will not deceive you. I know I couldn't do that, even if I wanted to. So I will not pretend that I lost my tail on purpose. I had often thought how much better I should be without it, but I had never brought myself to have it off. You know how it is. And then I had it done for me, willy-nilly: I was caught in a trap.

OLD FOX: Bad luck.

REYNARD: No sir. There you're wrong, if you will pardon my saying so. I thought it was bad luck at first, but I was wrong, just as you are wrong. It was not bad luck, sir, it was good luck—and that is what I wanted to tell you all. I'll not pretend that I liked it at first—I didn't. I hated it. I was ashamed to be seen. And then I began to notice. The first thing I noticed was that I had more spare time than ever before. Why?—because I hadn't a tail for ever needing cleaning. That set me thinking. Of what use are tails, except for getting into mud, and traps?

SHARP-EAR: That's all very well, Reynard, but you're talking nonsense all the same, and you know it.

OLD FOX: Order! Order!

REYNARD: Thank you, sir, but it's all right: I'd like to ask friend Sharp-ear a question. Brother Sharp-ear: are you really so proud of that tail of yours?

SHARP-EAR: Of course I am.

REYNARD: You're not, if you'll excuse me. You're ashamed of it. Just think a minute: What do you do with it when you feel a fool? Tuck it down. What do you do when the huntsman is about? Tuck it down. You're afraid of it, that's what you are.

RED: I'd never thought of that.

REYNARD: No, sir, and you aren't the only one who hadn't thought of it. Friend Sharp-ear hadn't thought, and

Foxes and Vixens, if I may be so bold, you hadn't thought. We don't think enough—and we pay for it. Foxes and Vixens, who is our greatest enemy?

ALL: Man!

REYNARD: Yes, man. Do men wear tails? Not they!—they're too clever. They look on tails as the mark of a fool. Why do they race us and chase us half the year round? To get our tails.

ALL: Shame! Shame!

REYNARD: Shame? Yes, I agree with you. What fools we are to wear tails just to make sport for our greatest enemy! Are you content to keep your tails spotless to please men?

ALL: No!

REYNARD: Do you *want* to please men?

ALL: No!

REYNARD: Will you go on pleasing men?

ALL: No!

RED: Off with our tails!

ALL: { Off with our tails!  
Why should we please men?  
Down with the huntsman!  
Do it now!  
Chi-yi-yi-yi!

(REYNARD *holds up a paw*.)

OLD FOX: Order! Order! Chair! Order!

(BEAR *rings bell*.)

REYNARD: I thought you would think as I do, even Brother Sharp-ear. But don't go too quickly, please. If you are going to do this thing, do it with your eyes open. Don't let it be said that I persuaded you against your wills. And another thing: if you are going to do it, do it properly, all of you. We don't want one or two cowardly ones keeping their tails on. That's all I have to say,

but I think our chairman has something to add.

BRUIN: Have I? What's that?

REYNARD: Proposing a motion.

BRUIN: Oh yes. Yes, of course. Foxes and Vixens, the proper thing would be for someone to propose a motion. Will anyone propose a motion?

SIX FOXES (*jumping up*): I will.

RUST: No, we don't want any motions. Let's do it now.

REYNARD: Brother Rust—just to please me, let everything be done in order. Friend Sharp-ear, you were all against it just now. But perhaps you have changed your mind. Perhaps you would propose the motion.

SHARP-EAR: Well—er—Mr. Chairman and friends all, I am sure you would like me to say, on behalf of all present, how grateful we are to Brother Reynard for his kind thoughtfulness for our good.

ALL: Chi-yi-yi-yi!

SHARP-EAR: Just now I was a bit sharp. I apologize.

REYNARD: Not at all, not at all.

SHARP-EAR: Thank you, sir. And now I have pleasure in proposing that we all have our tails off as fast as we can do it.

ALL: Chi-yi-yi-yi!

SHARP-EAR: And no half-and-half about it either. Anybody who doesn't agree, turn him out of the tribe.

ALL: Chi-yi-yi-yi!

BRUIN: It has been proposed by Brother—er—Sharp-ear that you all have your tails off as fast as you can do it, and anyone who doesn't agree is to be turned out of the tribe. Those in favour?

(*All paws go up*.)

BRUIN: That's carried, then.

OLD FOX: But, Mr. Chairman—

oughtn't the motion to be seconded?

REYNARD: Yes, it ought. Thank you, sir.

BRUIN: Of course, of course. Will anyone second the motion?

REYNARD: Perhaps our friend here would second the motion himself?

OLD FOX: With pleasure. Mr. Chairman, Foxes and Vixens, we have all heard Brother Reynard's able speech with great pleasure. I have heard some speeches in my time, but I can honestly say I have never heard a more clever one. Clever isn't the word, in fact. It was cunning.

Now, Foxes and Vixens, Brother Reynard has advised us to think twice before we snap our tails off, and he is quite right about that. I am all for getting rid of my tail myself. People will laugh at me, of course, but that doesn't trouble me. I am too old to care what I look like. But some of you boys and girls may be different. Make up your minds before you do it. You will be better off without your tails, of course, but it's no good your grumbling after you have got rid of them. Because once they are off, there's no putting them on again, you know.

You are grateful to Brother Reynard now, and quite right too. But mind you are just as grateful to him in a week's time. You think you will be? But will you be? We foxes are not always as grateful as we ought to be. That is why, before seconding the motion, as I want to do, I am saying these few words to those of you who may still have a doubt or two at the back of your minds. There are two things you may be thinking. You oughtn't to be thinking them, but perhaps you are. You may be ashamed to say them—and well you may be—so I will say them for

you. The first thing is—would kind Brother Fox worry so much about what men think of his tail if he still had a tail for them to think of? Would he? Are you thinking that? I am ashamed of you, really I am. The second thing you may be thinking to yourself is, would Brother Reynard be so anxious for us to snap our tails off if he could clap his own on again? Well, is that what you are thinking? Is it? Come along, now, be honest.

*(He stands looking at them in his cunning old way. Somebody begins to giggle, and in no time everyone is laughing uproariously. BRUIN keeps ringing his bell furiously, but without effect: everyone is trooping off, singing "Three Blind Mice," and shouting remarks: Bad luck, Reynard! . . . Better luck next time! . . . Who's coming hunting? etc. BUN is almost beside himself with delight. Presently no one is left but REYNARD, BRUIN, OLD FOX, and BUN still in his corner.)*

OLD FOX: Well, well! Now who'd have thought they would go on like that? You never can tell with these foxes. They don't know their own minds for two minutes together. Well, well, no use crying over spilt milk. I must be getting along. Good night, Master Bruin, good night, Brother Reynard. We must talk about this tail business again some other time. Good night. *(Exit.)*

*(REYNARD shakes a fist after him, and starts to follow him angrily. But BRUIN takes hold of him.)*

BRUIN: Come on. No use saying any more. Least said, soonest mended.

*(They go off the other way, REYNARD very angry. BUN, keeping his mirth down somehow, comes to centre and begins dancing with delight. He may*

*sing, to the tune of the beginning and end of "Three Blind Mice":*

Too clever by half!  
Too clever by half!  
It's nice to be clever  
But never, oh never  
Be too clever by half.

(*He is still dancing when the*  
CURTAINS CLOSE.)

### MANY HANDS

#### A PROVERB PLAY IN ONE SCENE

Mrs. Giles, *who kneads dough*,  
Mrs. Parker, *who washes-up*,  
Mrs. Smith, *who milks the cow*,\*  
Mrs. Carpenter, *who makes the butter*,  
Mrs. Gardener, *who lays the table*,  
Mrs. Wainwright, *who peels potatoes*,  
Mrs. Painter, *who chops wood*,  
Mrs. Apothecary, *who collects eggs*,  
Mrs. Spicer, *who sweeps up*,  
Mrs. Scivener, *who dusts*.

*The scene is supposed to be a farm kitchen and the cow byre near by.*

(*As the curtains part, MRS. GILES (MOTHER) is seen kneading dough, which she will presently set down to rise. The clock strikes nine.*)

MOTHER: Nine o'clock! Really, when you're busy the clock seems to go on wheels. How I shall get done in time I do not know. (*A knock at the door.*) Now who will that be? Come in.

MRS. PARKER (*entering with a jug*): Good morning, Mrs. Giles.

MOTHER: Good morning, Mrs. Parker, and what can I do for you?

MRS. PARKER: I wondered if you could spare a body an extra quart of milk.

\* As many of these others may appear as are wanted, or some may be dispensed with, Mrs. Giles omitting their occupations from her list. On the other hand, if more parts are wanted, more occupations may be added.

MOTHER: Oh yes, I dare say I can, but you'll have to get it for yourself. I'm that busy. I've made the beds and cleared the breakfast things, and I'm kneading the dough. But I've still got the washing-up to do, and the cow to milk, and the butter to make, and the dinner to lay for Father and George, and the potatoes to peel, and the wood to chop, and the eggs to collect, and the poultry to feed, and the floor to sweep, and the place to dust round—and how to get it all done in time to catch the bus (*or carrier's cart*) to meet the train (*or stage coach*) that's bringing my daughter down from London town I simply do not know.

MRS. PARKER: Never mind, Mrs. Giles. I'm in no hurry. I'll do the washing-up for you.

MOTHER: Oh, thank you, Mrs. Parker. That's kind of you indeed.

(*They work for a little while. Then Mrs. Parker looks through the window over the sink.*)

MRS. PARKER: Now there's Mrs. Smith going down the lane. I dare say she would lend a hand, too. (*Calls*) Mrs. Smith! Mrs. Smith!

MRS. SMITH (*off*): Yes?

MRS. PARKER: Just come in for a minute, will you?

MRS. SMITH (*off*): Coming! (*She enters.*) Good morning, Mrs. Giles. What's the matter?

MRS. PARKER: She's got more on her hands than she can manage.

MOTHER: I've made the beds and cleared the breakfast things—

MRS. PARKER: and I'm doing the washing-up.

MOTHER: But I've still got the cow to milk, and the butter to make, and the dinner to lay for Father and George, and the potatoes to peel, and the wood

to chop, and the eggs to get, and the poultry to feed, and the floor to sweep, and the place to dust round—

MRS. PARKER: and how to get it all done in time to catch the bus (or carrier's cart) to meet the train (or stage coach) that's bringing her daughter down from London she simply does not know.

MRS. SMITH: Never mind, Mrs. Giles, I'll milk the cow for you.

MOTHER: Oh, thank you, Mrs. Smith. That's kind of you indeed.

*(They mime their occupations for a little while. Then MRS. PARKER notices MRS. CARPENTER in the lane.)*

MRS. PARKER: Now there's Mrs. Carpenter going down the lane. I dare say she would lend a hand too. *(Calls):* Mrs. Carpenter! Mrs. Carpenter!

MRS. CARPENTER *(off)*: Yes?

MRS. PARKER: Just come in for a minute, will you?

MRS. CARPENTER *(off)*: Coming! *(She enters.)* Good morning, Mrs. Giles. What's the matter?

MRS. PARKER and MRS. SMITH: She's got more on her hands than she can manage.

MOTHER: I've made the beds and cleared the breakfast things—

MRS. PARKER: and I'm doing the washing-up—

MRS. SMITH: and I'm milking the cow.

MOTHER: But I've still got the butter to make, etc.—

MRS. PARKER and MRS. SMITH: and how to get it all done, etc.—

MRS. CARPENTER: Never mind, Mrs. Giles, I'll make the butter for you.

MOTHER: Oh, thank you, Mrs. Carpenter. That's kind of you indeed.

*(And so it goes on, all the workers saying what they are doing, Mother leaving one thing each time off her list,*

*which she can have on a slip of paper, the helpers chiming in each time with "and how to get it all done," etc., and the newcomers taking over the first thing on Mother's list. Finally, when eventually everybody is miming hard, the clock strikes ten. They all stop.)*

ALL: There! I've just finished, and it's still only ten o'clock.

MRS. PARKER: If you put your things on straight away you'll be in nice time, Mrs. Giles.

MOTHER: They're all ready on the hook.

MRS. PARKER: I'll get them for you. . . . Here you are, my dear.

*(Either really or in mime they put on her cloak and bonnet, tie the strings under her chin, give her her umbrella and bag and so on, adding suitable remarks the while.)*

MRS. PARKER: There. Have you got your purse?

MOTHER: It's in the bag.

MRS. PARKER: Off you go, then.

MOTHER: Yes, it's time. Ay, it's a true saying: Many hands make light work. Thank you kindly, everyone.

ALL: Not at all, etc.

MOTHER *(just as she is going)*: Bless my heart, I've forgotten to take off my apron. What would our Jenny think if I went to meet her from London town in an old apron?

*(She takes it off amid laughter and chatter and goes off.)*

*(They are all waving and saying Good-bye! Good luck! etc., as the*

CURTAINS CLOSE)

The following play, which exemplifies the first part of this chapter, is here given for a mixed cast. It might equally well be played by all boys or all girls.

# VARIED FORMS OF DRAMATIC WORK

## THE DARK HORSE

### Characters:

The Producer  
 The Prompter (Jenny)  
 Jean, *who plays the Old Relation\**  
 Mary, *who plays the Reader*  
 Bill \*  
 Jack  
 Alan  
 Tom  
 Evan  
 Dick  
 Alice  
 Frances  
 Hazel  
 Nick  
 John

*who play the five Young Bees  
 who speak \**

*who play the Sentinels \**

Any number of other Young Bees.\*

*The scene is a classroom, woodwork shop, playground, or anywhere else in school where a rehearsal might take place. Time: a Saturday morning.*

*(As the curtains part the whole cast is on stage except the PRODUCER, JACK, and TOM. JENNY is sitting in her corner glancing over her prompt copy, looking rather left out. The others are saying over their lines, doing bits of action and so on, all with a fair amount of noise. Someone may be playing a pipe.)*

JOHN: Nearly ten-thirty. Where's our Producer?

NICK: I guess his mother's sent him on an errand.

JEAN: He'll be here. He's never late.

JOHN: He will be this time if he doesn't hurry up.

ALAN (*looking through the glass door*): Here he comes, ninety miles an hour. (*Opens the door with a sweep.*) Enter the Producer.

PRODUCER (*entering*): Hallo! Sorry

\* These may be in Bee costume or head-dresses, or not, as convenience allows.

I was nearly late. Are we ready? Just squat down a minute, everybody. . . . Now listen. This is our last rehearsal but one, so do your best. You know your stuff well, so don't be afraid of it. Let 'em have it in the back row. Imagine the audience sitting there. All right—stand aside those who aren't on at the beginning. Reader, ready to step out between the curtains before they open. Sentinels, one on each side of the door, centre back. Young Bees ready to come on. Old Relation, sweeping the step. Be very old indeed, mind. Traveller Bee, ready to fly on angrily.

BILL: He isn't here.

PRODUCER: What? Where is he? It's too bad. He knows the competition is on Tuesday. Is anybody else not here?

EVAN: Jack Thomas.

PRODUCER: I think it's the limit. Well, we can't wait for them. Bill, you haven't anything to do yet. Just stand in and read the Traveller Bee, will you?

BILL: Right. Where's the book?

PRODUCER: Here you are. Where's the prompter?

JENNY (*who has been in her corner all the time, very quietly*): Here I am.

PRODUCER: Good for you, Jenny. And listen: if you're going to prompt, prompt. Don't be afraid of it. Speak out. If the audience hears, it serves them right. Don't let them lag.

JENNY (*meekly*): I'll try.

PRODUCER: You're so quiet. Like a mouse.

JENNY: Sorry.

DICK: Good old Jenny! You let 'em have it. (*Laughter.*)

PRODUCER (*rapping for silence*): Come on, Reader, start. Ready, everybody.

READER (*stepping to the front and bowing*): Ladies and gentlemen, we



## H O M E - M A D E   P L A Y S

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should like to present to you our production of "The Discontented Bees." It would be a great help if we had fine scenery and costumes, but we haven't, so you will have to picture them for yourselves.

Please to imagine that you are watching the front step of a beehive on a sunny morning in June.

PRODUCER: That's where the curtains open. Go to the side, Reader. That's fine. Carry on.

READER: A Sentinel Bee stands on each side of the front door. A very old bee, the Old Relation, is sweeping the step. Traveller Bee flies down angrily.

RELATION: Why, Traveller! You do look cross.

TRAVELLER: Yes, Old Relation, and so I am.

RELATION: Yet you went out happily enough. What is the matter?

TRAVELLER: Everything. I have just found out that I am a miserable creature.

RELATION: Really? Who told you that? You did not think of it for yourself. I call that very silly. (*Goes on sweeping.*) I shall say no more to you.

TRAVELLER: Don't, then. It is true, all the same. I am a miserable creature.

RELATION: Don't shout about it, then. Here are a crowd of young bees coming out of the hive. We do not want them to hear.

TRAVELLER: I do.

(*Enter Young Bees.*)

1ST BEE: What a beautiful day it is!

2ND BEE: It is good just to be alive.

3RD BEE: Yes, ours is a happy life.

TRAVELLER: No, it isn't. We are miserable creatures, all of us.

4TH BEE: Why do you say that?

TRAVELLER: Listen.

PRODUCER: Oh, where is Tom? He

ought to be shot. It's the limit.

ALAN (*looking through the door*): Here's Jack. Perhaps he knows something about it.

(*Enter Jack, much out of breath.*)

PRODUCER: Look here, where have you been? Rehearsal was at ten-thirty, and you know it.

JACK: Sorry, but I've been waiting for Tom.

PRODUCER: And what's he playing at, I'd like to know?

JACK: He's waiting till a trunk call comes through on the 'phone for his father—and what do you think?—he may have to go away on Tuesday morning.

ALL: What? *etc.*

PRODUCER: But he can't go away on Tuesday morning. The show's on Tuesday evening.

JACK: I know. He's in an awful stew. He didn't expect to have to go till Wednesday, but now it looks as if his father will have to go on Tuesday. That's what he's waiting to hear on the 'phone. But Tom seems to think it's pretty certain he'll have to go.

JEAN: And he's in the "Green Grass" play too. How will they get on?

PRODUCER: They must look after that. It's ours I'm worried about. He's miles our best actor, and if he falls out, what are we going to do on Tuesday?

ALICE: You'll have to coach somebody up in the part.

PRODUCER: Don't be silly. Who could do it in the time?

ALICE: You could, couldn't you?

PRODUCER: What's the good of that? You know the rule. producers not to act in their own shows—and quite right, too.

JEAN: Perhaps he won't have to go.

PRODUCER: We'd better fix on some-

## V A R I E D F O R M S O F D R A M A T I C W O R K

body else in case—and if he has to have his book in his hand, he'll have to. Any volunteers? (*Silence.*) Come on, who will try?

BILL: Well, I wouldn't mind, but it's no joke following on Tom. He's so good.

OTHERS: Yes, that's the trouble.

BILL: I could never get away with that big speech the way he does. I should feel such a wash-out after Tom.

PRODUCER: Yes, I know Tom's our best. But still, somebody must do it. Come on now—be a sport, somebody. Who'll volunteer? (*There is a pause.*)

JENNY (*in the smallest voice*): I will.

(*General reaction of dismay at such an idiotic idea.*)

PRODUCER: But look here, Jenny: you don't know it.

JENNY: Yes, I do. I know nearly the whole play.

PRODUCER: Yes, I reckon you do. You're a jolly good prompter. All right. (*More dismay.*) Go outside the door and get ready for your entry.

(*She goes out and ALICE closes the door. There is at once a general babble.*)

BILL: What did you do that for? She won't be able to act for nuts.

PRODUCER: Of course she won't. But it was jolly sporting of her to offer. We must give her a trial. Then we shall have to tell her. Get to your places, Sentinels. Sweep, Relation. Open the door, somebody. (*Shouting:*) Come on, Jenny, nice and angry.

(*Jenny, buzzing like ten wasps, makes an entry which surprises everyone.*)

RELATION: Why, Traveller! You do look cross.

JENNY (*with tremendous spirit*): Yes, Old Relation, and so I am.

PRODUCER: Jolly good, Jenny! What's happened to you?

JENNY: Oh, nothing.

PRODUCER: Look here, let's jump straight to the big speech. Young Bees, give her your entry, and then Jenny, up on the box—

JENNY (*meekly*): Yes, I know.

(*Enter YOUNG BEES.*)

1ST BEE: What a beautiful day it is!

2ND BEE: It is good just to be alive.

3RD BEE: Yes, ours is a happy life.

JENNY: No, it isn't. We are miserable creatures, all of us.

4TH BEE: Why do you say that?

JENNY: Listen. I will tell you. This morning I went out after honey as usual. Presently I came to a man-hive. There was a square door-piece open. I went in. There were great lumps of hard pink honey on the table in a dish. I took some and tried to come out. But something had happened to the door-piece. I hit my head. I could see out but could not get out. I crawled up and down a step. Then I heard a boy-man and a girl-man talking.

5TH BEE: What about?

JENNY: Me. The boy-man said, "Look! That is a worker-bee, poor wretch!" and the girl-man said, "Why do you say 'poor wretch'?"

Then the boy-man said, "Uncle Collins says that anyone who works for anyone else is a poor wretch. Worker-bees work and slave for the Queen-bee. She sits about and does nothing."

RELATION: Does nothing! Ha-ha! (*Sweeps again.*)

JENNY: Ha-ha! You may laugh, but it is true, (*to the others*) isn't it?

BEES: Zzzz! Yes, it is. Zzzz!

JENNY: And we work and slave. Who gathers the honey from dawn till dusk? The Queen? No. We do. Who makes it in the hive? We do. Who builds the

## HOME - MADE PLAYS

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comb? We do. (*The BEES buzz angrily.*) And why should we? Are we not as good as she is? Listen. If—oh

(*JENNY stops lamely and looks at the door, where TOM JENKINS has been standing unnoticed for some moments. Everybody looks that way.*)

ALL (*rather hushed*): Tom! etc.

(*Tom claps loudly and everyone joins in, with cheering noises.*)

TOM: Jolly good, Jenny! What are you getting down for? Go on. Finish it.

JENNY: Oh, I couldn't.

TOM: Well, you'd better, because it looks as if you'll have to do it on the night.

PRODUCER: Why? Have you got to go?

TOM: No. We're not going till Wednesday after all. But I'm not going to play that part. It wouldn't be fair. I've got a good part in the other play, and Jenny deserves it. Besides, she's ten times better than I am.

PRODUCER: Well, you were jolly good, Tom.

TOM: But Jenny's better. Isn't she, now?

PRODUCER: Well . . .

ALL: Good old Tom! etc.

PRODUCER: Now then, Jenny, what about it? Now's your chance. Do you know the whole part?

JENNY: Yes. But Tom ought to do it.

TOM: Well, I'm not going to, so now you know.

PRODUCER: And you know all the moves?

JENNY: Yes. I don't know if I can do that bit just before the end.

TOM: Of course you can. I'll help you.

JENNY: Oh, Tom, you are nice.

TOM: Oh, go on! Why didn't you tell us you could act?

JENNY: I didn't know I could.

TOM: What? I hadn't you done any at your other school?

JENNY: No. I never had the chance.

TOM: Well, you've got it now. So get on with it. I'll prompt. And here's something to start you off with. Three cheers for our Jenny! (*They are given.*)

PRODUCER: Ready? We'll start again. Sentinels, Old Bees. Close the curtain. Now then, Reader. Do it better than ever, everybody.

(*The curtains close, but the Reader stays in front to prevent applause.*)

READER: Ladies and gentlemen, you haven't had "The Discontented Bees" after all, but you have had our own play in which we used a piece of it—and I hope you enjoyed hearing it as much as we enjoyed making it. If so, you can clap very loudly when you see all the play-makers together.

(*The Curtains open, showing a fine tableau of all players, and then, for the last time,*

THE CURTAINS CLOSE.)

# USEFUL BOOKS

## FOR TEACHERS

### *Class and Group Technique:*

**ACTING GAMES**, by Freda Collins (University of London Press), goes into useful detail as to methods of devising plays and conducting dramatic activities with large groups, with numerous specimens of results.

**CLASSROOM DRAMATICS**, by Rodney Bennett (University of London Press), deals in detail with all types of play-making and other dramatic work which is practicable in the average Primary class, covering the same ground as the *London Dramatic Books* mentioned later.

**EIGHT FOLK-TALE PLAYS**, by Fieda Collins (Harrap), has a useful introduction considering large-group activities.

### *General Production Method:*

**CHILDREN IN THE MARKET-PLACE**, by Fieda Collins (University of London Press), concentrates on the making and presentation of religious plays with children.

**LET'S DO A PLAY!**, by Rodney Bennett (Nelson), gives practical details concerning every branch of amateur work.

**PLAY PRODUCTION FOR AMATEURS**, by Rodney Bennett (Curwen), covers much the same ground, but with more emphasis on school work.

### *Mime:*

**MIMES AND MIMING**, by Isabel Chisman and Gladys Wiles (Nelson), explains method in detail, and is not too technical to be of practical use to the teacher without special training.

**TWELVE MIME PLAYS**, by Irene Mawer (Methuen), with illustrations.

**NINE MIME PLAYS**, by Winifred Jones (Methuen).

### *Glove Puppetry:*

**GLOVE PUPPETRY**, by D. P. Harding (Basil Blackwell).

**THE GLOVE PUPPET BOOK**, by Rodney Bennett (Curwen).

Both of these books, besides discussing manipulation, explore the possibilities of simple puppetry as an incentive to speech-making, oral and written composition, handicraft, etc. Specimen puppet plays.

## CLASS SERIES

The following are series of dramatic books designed to provide continuous dramatic courses for use throughout the Primary School, age 7 to 11.

**DRAMA HIGHWAY**, edited by John Hampden (Dent).

**INVITATION TO THE PLAY**, edited by Mary Cousins (Nelson).

The first of these three books contains five brief plays and a considerable and valuable selection of dramatized or dramatizable poems. The second presents a higher proportion of plays, and the third gives eleven modern plays in prose and verse.

**LONDON DRAMATIC BOOKS**, Second Series, by Rodney Bennett (University of London Press), consists of four books containing numerous plays in prose and verse, each with dramatic exercises attached. Examples occur of various types of play-making: dramatized poems, fables, stories, anecdotes, everyday episodes, and incidents from history and the Bible. Each book

## USEFUL BOOKS

has a teachers' book corresponding, setting out lesson-by-lesson procedure, and suggesting how dramatic work may be used as a basis for speech-training, oral and written composition, crafts, etc. The last book of the first (infant) series, and the first of the third (senior) series, are suitable respectively for use with retarded and advanced Primary classes.

**READING SCENES FROM FAMOUS STORIES**, by Rodney Bennett (Bell). These four books treat drama as an introduction to literature, presenting dramatizations of incidents from standard and modern stories. Exercises

**MORE READING SCENES FROM FAMOUS STORIES**, by Rodney Bennett (Bell): four books parallel with the above, but more varied in literary sources and with more emphasis on play-making. Exercises.

**RING UP THE CURTAIN** (McDougall): three books, the first containing four dramatized poems and three plays, and the others four plays apiece, some adapted from literature.

**SWING-ALONG DRAMATIC READERS**, by W. Bertram White (Oliver & Boyd). four books.

### MISCELLANEOUS

The following list does not pretend to be exhaustive. It confines itself to books planned for use in school, if not especially in connection with classroom activities, mostly with large groups. It thus excludes many collections by individual authors which contain much good material, including occasional pieces calling for more than the usual small cast.

*Dramatic Adaptations from Literature:*

**WE READ THEM ALOUD** (Nelson). These two books contain modern stories adapted by E. Lucia Turnbull in such a way as to provide a handy

method of transition from ordinary to dramatic reading.

**A PLAY READER FOR LITTLE ONES**, by O. M. Rookwood (Oxford), suitable for the youngest class.

**SCENES FROM HIAWATHA**, adapted by Rodney Bennett for narrator and numerous part players; some optional choral speech (Bell).

**PLAYS FROM LITERATURE**, Junior Book, by Evelyn Smith (Nelson), are suitable for upper primary classes of good grade.

**EXITS AND ENTRANCES**, two books by W. Bertram White (University of London Press), containing six and five plays, chiefly drawn from literature and history, suitable for the most advanced grade.

*Dramatic Scenes from History:*

**VITAL MOMENTS IN HISTORY**, by Sam Stewart (Oliver & Boyd), historical incidents, modern as well as period, published singly.

**HISTORY PLAYS FOR JUNIORS**, by John R. Crossland (Collins, Silver Torch Series, No. 21), for ages 9-11; notes on acting, making properties, etc.

**THE CASTLES OF ENGLAND** (two books), **PRACTICAL PLAYS FOR STAGE AND CLASSROOM** (two books), and **STORY-TELLERS OF BRITAIN** (three books), all by L. Du Gaide Peach (University of London Press), though rather too mature for any but exceptionally advanced Primary classes, are noteworthy for their vivid and unconventional treatment of history.

*Religious Plays*

University of London Press issues a short but good series, some of which are suitable for players of this age. The S.P.C.K. issues a great number of titles, some of the modern items of which are as good as many of the older ones are senti-

## V A R I E D F O R M S O F D R A M A T I C W O R K

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mental and bad. Those sponsored by the Religious Drama Society, which publishes largely through the S.P.C.K., are uniformly worthy of note, being of real literary and dramatic value.

### *Verse:*

PLAYS IN VERSE, by Clive Sansom (Black), are of distinguished quality and include choral work.

PLAYS IN VERSE and MORE PLAYS IN VERSE (Collins, Silver Torch Series, Nos. 30 and 33) are designed for ages 9-11 and 8-11.

### *Plays Published Individually:*

LONDON ONE-PLAY BOOKS, edited by Rodney Bennett (University of London Press), include various plays suitable for the Primary ages, mostly for moderately large casts.

SCHOOL PLAYS FOR JUNIORS (Macmillan), eleven titles, which are also available in collected form, three books.

### *Various:*

EIGHT EASY PLAYS, by R. K. and M. I. R. Polkinghorne (University of London Press), suitable for the eight- and nine-year-olds. The Red Indian play fits in with their geography syllabus. Suggestions are given as to how children can make their own costumes and scenery. This is also true of

PLAYS FOR LITTLE PLAYERS, by R. K. and M. I. R. Polkinghorne, suitable for children of seven to nine (University of London Press).

UP GOES THE CURTAIN!, by R. K. and M. I. R. Polkinghorne (University of London Press), contains six plays for average children in the upper half of the Primary School, with photographs showing costumes and groups.

LITTLE PLAYS FOR SCHOOL AND HOME, by Githa Sowerby, two books (Oxford).

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE Series, ed. Cyril Swinson (Black), specializes in plays suitable for lower Primary classes, with brief notes. They are notable for being really young and often absurd, yet in no way childish.

JUNIOR PLAYS, four books (Collins, Laurel and Gold Series, Nos. 29, 30, 44, and 54).

TWELVE PLAYS FOR JUNIORS, MORE PLAYS FOR JUNIORS, and THE HAPPY BOOK OF PLAYS (Collins, Silver Torch Series, Nos. 10, 19, and 43) are respectively for ages 7-9, 9-11.

SIX MODERN PLAYS and EIGHT MODERN PLAYS, ed. John Hampden (Nelson). The first is an amusing selection of distinguished quality, all suitable for upper Primary classes. The second has a wider age range, but is notable for its material for mock trials and Christmas celebrations.

CHRISTMAS PLAYS, ed. John Hampden (Nelson), range from nativities to a Christmas revue, all suitable for fairly young players.

